■ InfoTech / B16

Microsoft Asia-Pac prexy talks about piracy

■Sports / A26

Jenny pockets more than P2M

■ Business / B2-4

BBC's Rico Hizon starts column

■ Lifestyle / D1

From hot flashes to hot babes

Tanong ng Bayan / A24

Amici curiae: Nakakatulong ba o nakakagulo?

2 Filipino seamen killed, 16 missing in tanker sinking

TWO FILIPINO seamen were killed and 16 were reported missing after a tanker carrying 13.3 million liters of industrial ethanol exploded and sank off the US East Coast, the Department of Foreign Affairs yesterday said.

DFA spokesperson Julia Heideman said six other Filipino crew members were injured late Saturday when the Bow Mariner, a

2 FILIPINO/ A21

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Jeepney drivers mount nationwide strike today

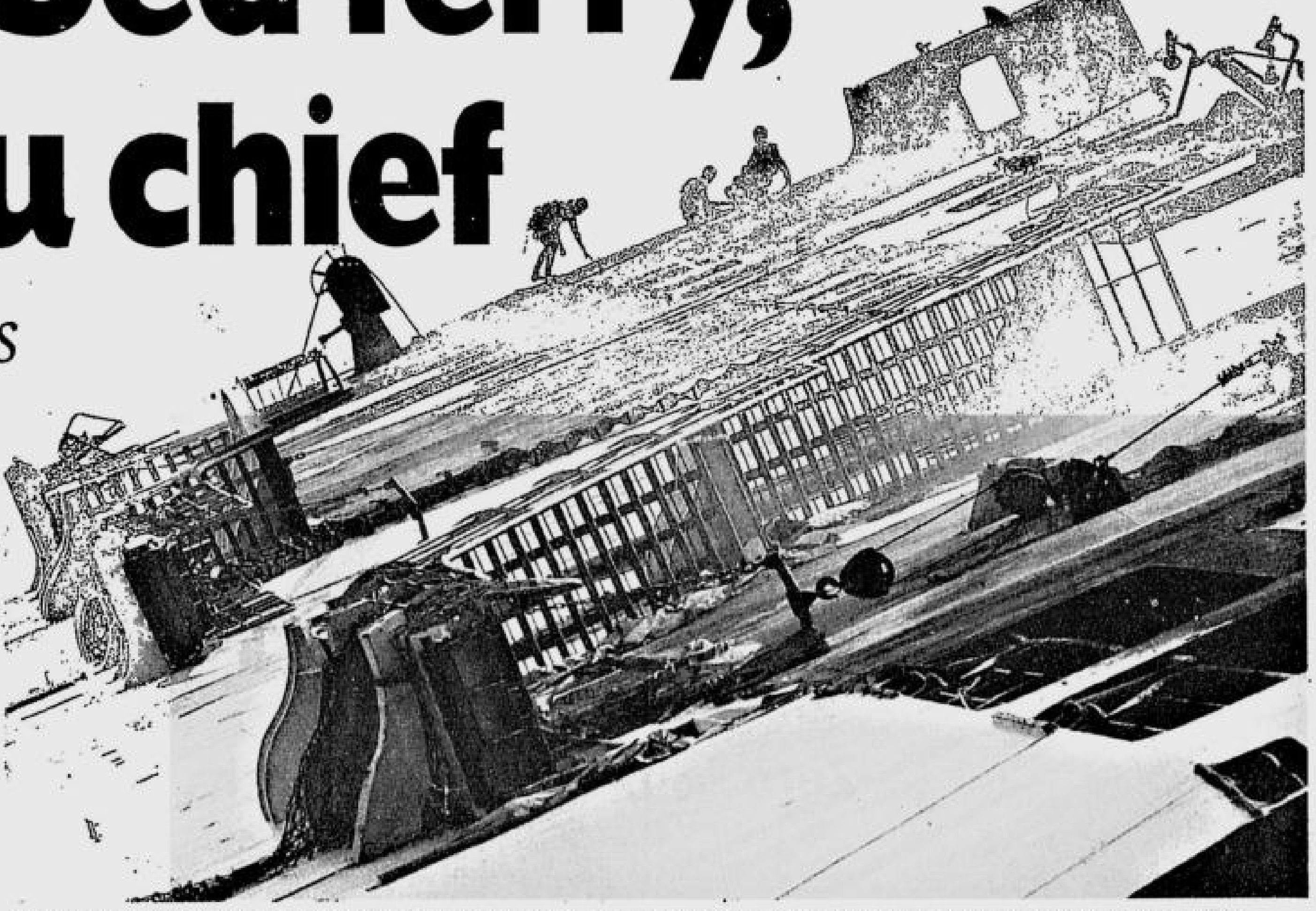
By Edson Castro Tandoc Jr. and PDI Bureaus

JUST STAY home today, three big transport groups advised commuters as thousands of jeepney drivers were set to strike in more than 100 cities and towns nationwide, starting at 5 a.m., to press their demands for a fare in-

JEEPNEY/ A19

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph Monday, March 1, 2004 ★★ 72 pages / 7 sections / vol. 19 / no. 84 P18 website: www.inq7.net

We bombed ferry, says Abu chief



GOING IN: Coast Guard rescuers prepare to enter the starboard side of the burned SuperFerry 14 in search of victims who may still be trapped inside. A total of 186 passengers remain missing. AFP

GMA says pranksters behind terror claim

By Arlyn de la Cruz, *Contributor,* **and Tarra Quismundo,** *Metro*

A MORO suicide bomber was behind the huge explosion that caused the fire which gutted the passenger ship SuperFerry 14 on Friday in Manila Bay, the Abu Sayyaf claimed yesterday.

"We did it!" Abu Sayyaf spokesperson Abu Soliman said in a phone interview. The fire killed at least one person and left 186 people missing.

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday appealed to the public to remain calm and sober as she denied claims the tragedy was the work of terrorists.

In a statement, the President said allegations that terrorists were behind the disaster "came from pranksters and other non-do-gooders who circulated text messages in a bid to sow fear among the people.

"It could be coming from the terrorists, but as an afterthought as their propaganda for their evil plans and to spread terror," Ms Macapagal told journalists and Coast Guard personnel.

Lt. Gen. Roy Kyamko, chief of the Southern Command, said he had to first verify "if it was Abu Soliman" talking, "as we fairly know where he is now and we are just waiting for the right time."

"One thing for sure is that this Soliman is not in Manila," Kyamko said in Zamboanga City.

ABU Sayyaf leader Jainal Antel Sali Jr., alias Abu Soliman. PDI PHOTO

Besides Soliman, Abu Sayyaf chief Khaddafy Janjalani claimed responsibility for the explosion.

Janjalani said the Abu Sayyaf had sent letters to WG&A, the previous owner of the ship, warning it three times about the planned attack. The last letter was sent last October, according to Janjalani.

Asked about the contents of the letter, the Abu Sayyaf chief said, "it involves use of our seas, taxes."

WG&A management confirmed last year that it received threats from the Abu Sayyaf. WG&A was bought in 2002 by the Aboitiz group and renamed Aboitiz Transport System Corp.

Soliman's claim was also an-

WE BOMBED/ A20

Rescuers smell stench of death on ship

By Tarra Quismundo
Metro
and Grace C. Albasin
PDI Mindanao Bureau

THE STENCH of death greeted investigators who boarded the passenger ship SuperFerry 14 for the first time yesterday after it caught fire three days ago.

"There is a smell of something dead. They will have to look for that," the Philippine Coast Guard commandant, Vice Adm. Arthur Gosingan said after 16 men from the Bureau of Fire Protection, and 18 from the PCG special operations group boarded the ship, now lying in Sisiman Bay in Mariveles, Bataan.

Aboitiz Transport System Corp., which owns the SuperFerry 14, has denied an Inquirer report that the stricken vessel had caught fire before.

"That can mean something but they have not yet found anything (whether) survivors or dead at this time," Gosingan said. The smoldering ferry had been too hot for rescue teams to board before Sunday.

Gosingan said that divers entered the ship through its submerged starboard side, while the investigators got in from the top.

Only one person has been confirmed dead after the fire on the 10,000-ton ferry, which had been carrying nearly 900 people. But authorities had said they hoped the missing were among the hundreds that had already been rescued.

The PCG is still trying to reconcile its statistics with that of the ship's owner, Aboitiz Transport System Corp.

Lt.(sg) Arman Balilo, PCG

RESCUERS / A21

Samar town mayor shot dead in cockfight arena; politics eyed

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

CALBAYOG CITY—A town mayor was shot dead Saturday evening by unidentified men inside the cockpit of the city sports complex in what could be the first election-related killing in Eastern Visayas.

Mayor Aniceto Olaje of Tarangnan, Samar, 45, died from a lone bullet wound in the head. One of his police escorts, identified as PO1 Sebastian Pinanggay, was wounded in the right thigh and brought to the Calbayog District Hospital.

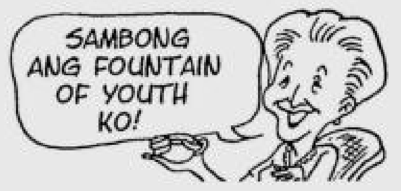
Olaje's family said there could have been no other reason for the murder but politics. A third-term mayor, Olaje had fielded his wife Emily, 44, in the town's mayoral race in May under the Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrat-Nationalist People's Coalition.

"They (her husband's opponents) wanted to silence him, knowing that without him, my candidacy will be paralyzed," Emily said. "I'm afraid that what they did to my husband will also happen to me," sho added.

"I want justice be served to my husband. He was killed helplessly. I beg our authorities to speed up its investigation. Please. I beg them to do that," Emily said, wiping her tears.

Police said Olaje was eating with his bodyguards at one corner of the cockpit at around 8:20 p.m. when two of the assailants, who were described as in their 20s, approached the group and immediately fired at the mayor. The gunmen's two companions

SAMAR/ A20


SAMBONG ANG FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH KO!

102-year-old can still thread needle

By Emir Emano Gamis
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

PRIETO DIAZ, Sorsogon—Felizberta Dogelio, the oldest living resident of this town at 102, can still thread a needle.

Is it a big needle with a large hole?

"No, it's a regular needle," claimed

102-YEAR-OLD/ A19

Class war theme has new variant

By Amando Doronila

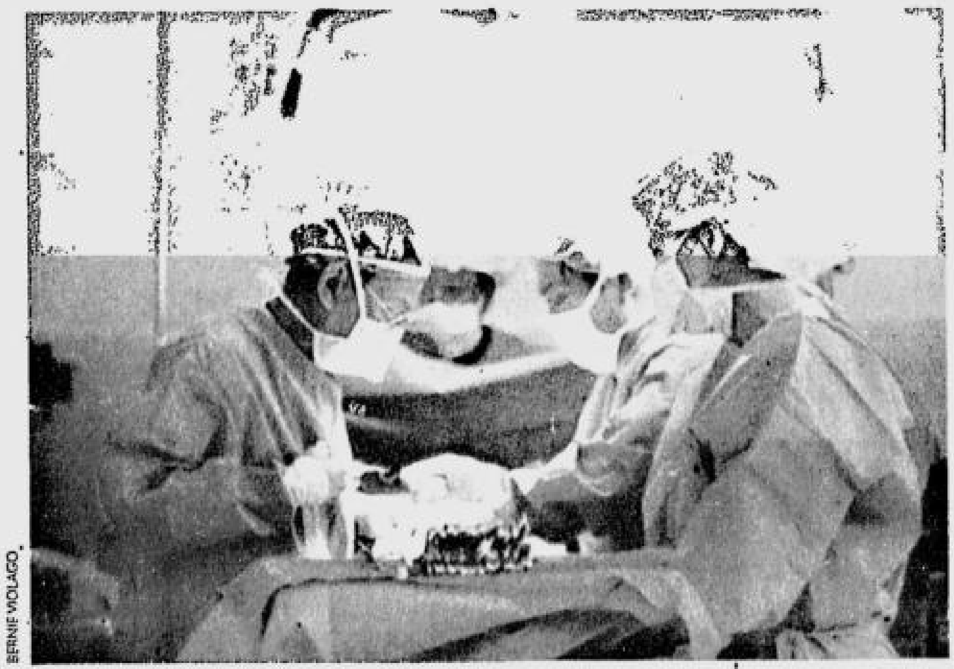
ANALYSIS

BOTH Pulse Asia and Social Weather Stations have drawn up the class profile of voters based on their preferences in the May 10 presidential election. According to recent surveys of the two private groups, the main electoral base of actor Fernando Poe Jr. is composed of the poor or "*masa*" DE socioeconomic class.

The more important concern of this article is not whether President Macapagal-Arroyo has caught up with Poe. The purpose of this article, which goes beyond the more immediate question of who is likely to win the presidential election, is to examine the more unsettling political implication of elections being decided by the *masa* vote.

According to the SWS Jan. 16-22 survey, Poe polled 36 per-

CLASS/ A19



BERNIE VIOLAGO

MEN in blue gowns: Surgeon Jose Morelos, anesthesiologist Alfredo Caragay, surgeon Teodoro Carangal and nurse Karen del Corro perform free surgery on the 38th patient on the fourth day of a medical mission at the West Pampanga Hospital in Lubao.

Medical mission underscores shining moment of Filipinos

By Lynett A. Villariba

WHILE THE nation celebrated the 18th anniversary of People Power on Edsa last week, 26 Filipino-American doctors and nurses from Baltimore and New York were busy transforming the sleepy town of Lubao, Pampanga, into a hospital hub.

The *balikbayan* patriots who lent their US-honed expertise in pediatrics, internal medicine and surgery were part of a medical-surgical mission sent by the US-based Foundation for Aid to the Philippines. The FAPI was established 18 years ago by Fil-Am doctors who were inspired by the Filipinos' shining moment that had come to be known as People Power.

For five days on Feb. 23-27, the Fil-Am doctors and surgeons treated over 2,000

MEDICAL/ A20

BERNIE VIOLAGO

SAY AH! Pediatrician Dr. Elenita Quizon checks up close what ails the children of Lubao, Pampanga, as a little girl gets a lot of encouragement from her brothers and mother.

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers.
SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/03/01/04

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	**Roxas**	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	**Cebu**	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	**Tacloban**	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	**Gen. Santos**	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	**Zamboanga**	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	**Cagayan de Oro**	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	**Davao**	Cloudy with Rains

Solon faces raps for diverting pork

By Carlito Pablo

GRAFT charges will be filed today before the Office of the Ombudsman against Rep. JR Nereus Acosta (LP, Bukidnon) for allegedly diverting P10.5 million of his Priority Development Assistance Fund, popularly known as "pork barrel," to two entities controlled by his family.

The two entities were identified as the Bukidnon Integrated Network of Home Industries Inc. (Binhi), which lends out funds at interest rates of 30-40 percent per year, and the Bukidnon Vegetables Producers Cooperative (BVPC).

In an interview, Acosta admitted that Binhi and BVPC had indeed been put up by his family.

Acosta, who is running for a third term in the first district of Bukidnon, said he did not see any conflict of interest when he funded his pork barrel to the family-controlled entities. "We're even proud of it," he said.

A congressman receives P60 million a year in "pork barrel" funds.

To be charged with Acosta are his mother, former Rep. Socorro Acosta, now mayor of the municipality of Manolo Fortich; his father Juan Acosta, and his aunt Nemia Bornidor, who is also Acosta's chief of staff.

Acosta's parents and aunt were incorporators and members of the board of trustees of the two entities.

The graft charges will be filed by the Bukidnon Crusade Against Graft and Corruption which had compiled voluminous documents, including photocopied checks, vouchers and Securities and Exchange Commission incorporation papers, to support the charges.

Catholic priests Frs. Venancio Balansag Jr. and Wilfredo Torayno, chair and secretary, respectively, of the BCGC, will file the complaint along with crusade members Vicente Abroguena and Felix Vergara Jr.

Torayno said he expects Acosta to dismiss the complaint as politically motivated.

"We won't go to court if we don't have documents," Torayno said. "If these were only political in nature, we could have just brought it before the pulpit."

Vergara said the documents would reveal the real Acosta. "He projects himself as Mr. Clean but look what we got," he said.

In their prepared complaint, the crusade members listed three specific offenses on the alleged misuse of Acosta's pork barrel funds.

- The release of P2.5 million for Binhi through the municipality of Talakag as "loan assistance" at "zero interest" on Aug. 2, 2001 which was used to lend out money at an interest rate of 30-40 percent.
- The release of P5.5 million for the BVPC through the municipality of Manolo Fortich on July 2, 2002.
- The use of P2.5 million from Acosta's pork barrel funds for Talakag town's purchase of a solar tunnel dryer in January 2001 but Acosta "took possession" of said facility for Binhi.

In their complaint, the crusade members said the funds were "utilized for private purposes and no proper accounting as to the disbursement thereof were made."

They said these acts violate the anti-graft law and the code of ethics for public officials which prohibit government officials from "directly or indirectly having financial pecuniary interest in any business, contract or transaction in connection with which he intervenes or takes part in his official capacity."

"They shall not dispense nor extend undue favors on account of their office to their relatives whether by consanguinity or affinity," they said.

But Acosta defended the release of his "pork barrel" to Binhi and the BVPC.

"They're not ghost projects; they're real," Acosta said. "Talk to the beneficiaries."

But Mayor Amado Noble of the municipality of Talakag, Bukidnon confirmed Acosta's alleged diversion of "pork barrel" funds.

The town of Talakag was used as a conduit for the P5 million in pork barrel funds that ended up in the two Acosta-owned entities.

In a sworn statement, Noble said that on Aug. 2, 2001, Acosta instructed him to receive P2.5 million from the solon's PDAF.

Noble said he was then instructed to release the money to Binhi as loan assistance at zero interest. "Such condition for release was forced upon us," Noble said.

He said that Binhi was supposed to remit P62,500 quarterly to Talakag as "repayment of the said loan for a period of 10 years." But this never came, he said.

Noble also recalled that in January 2001, he signed a memorandum of agreement prepared by Acosta's office for the purchase of a solar tunnel dryer worth P2.5 million for use by the town of Talakag. But the solar dryer ended up with Binhi, he said.

Aquino recalls Sandra Burton, offers Mass

FORMER President Corazon Aquino expressed sorrow yesterday at the death of leading American journalist Sandra Burton and recalled her role in pivotal events in the country's history.

"Her death is a personal loss to me," Aquino said in a statement released after a doctor in Indonesia said the former Time magazine correspondent had died of natural causes on the resort island of Bali at the age of 62.

"(Her demise) is a great loss not only to Time magazine... but most especially to the Filipino people because she was a great friend of the people," Aquino said.

Aquino recalled that Burton had testified before the Agrava Commission which inquired into the murder of her husband, opposition leader Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino, in 1983.

Burton was on Benigno Aquino's plane when he returned from exile in the United States on Aug. 21, 1983. He was shot dead at the airport by soldiers of then-president Ferdinand Marcos.

The killing sparked growing unrest culminating in a popular revolt in 1986 that toppled Marcos from power and installed Corazon Aquino as president, ushering in the restoration of democracy in the country.

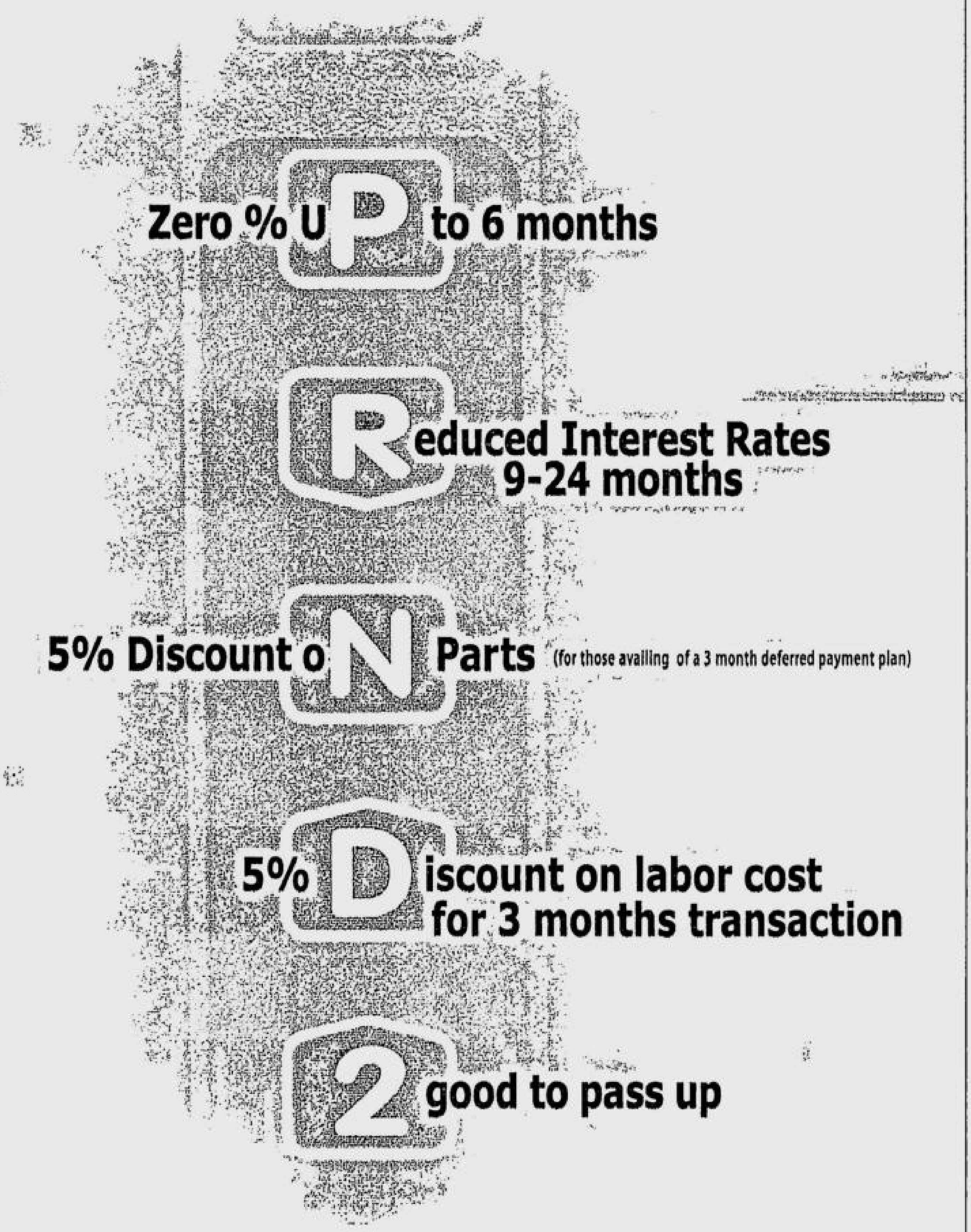
"Even after my presidency, she would come and we would talk every time she visited the country," Aquino recalled. She also said Burton had visited the Ninoy Aquino museum in Tarlac which displayed mementos of the late senator and of the 1986 revolt.

Aquino said she would sponsor a Mass for Burton at 5:30 p.m. on March 5 at the Edsa Shrine.

Burton, a US citizen, died at her rented house in Bali's capital Denpasar on Feb. 27, a doctor there said.

She joined Time in 1964 and left several years ago, although she continued to contribute to the magazine as a freelancer.

Burton was a Time correspondent in Paris in 1977 and was named chief of the Hong Kong bureau in 1982 and later of the Beijing bureau. *AFP, with a report from Christian Esguerra*



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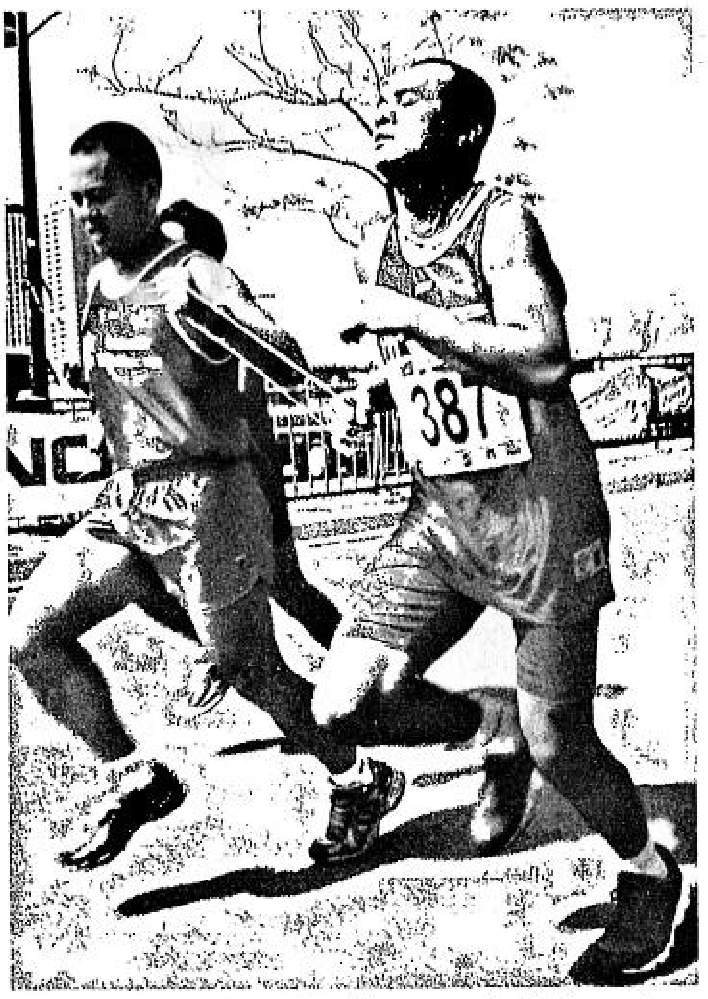


BLIND man Rodrigo Eje (right) holds on to a cord pulled by running priest Fr. Robert Reyes (left) in the 42-km long distance run from Intramuros to The Fort held yesterday. Eje clocked 5 hours and 30 minutes, way ahead of other marathoners, and set a record as the first totally blind Filipino runner to complete a marathon. ERIK ARAZAS

Educators say GMA scholarship plan is recycled Ninoy project

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

HAS PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo run out of fresh ideas that she had to claim credit for a scholarship program that had long been in existence just to ensure her victory in the May elections?

But for a different name, Ms Macapagal's P500-million Students Assistance Fund for Education for a Strong Republic (SAFE 4 SR) is a copy of the "Study Now, Pay Later" scholarship program which the slain Sen. Benigno S. Aquino Jr. had sponsored in the Senate back in 1968.

Ironically, Aquino's "Study Now, Pay Later" bill was drafted by one of Ms Macapagal's rivals in the presidential race, former Education Secretary Raul S. Roco, who was then head of the late senator's legal staff.

Officials of the Commission on Higher Education yesterday branded Ms Macapagal's study now-pay later program as "recycled."

Tied to campaign

CHEd chair Bro. Rolando Dizon FSC admitted that the program's relaunching was tied to Ms Macapagal's presidential campaign.

"It will not hurt her own campaign. Let's not be hypocritical in saying this has absolutely no political component. It does (have)," Dizon said in a press conference Friday.

CHEd officials said the P500 million allotted for SAFE 4 SR which Malacañang launched with much fanfare on Jan. 27 at the Araneta Coliseum came from one of their scholarship funds.

Ms Macapagal that day released P200 million and promised another P300 million for the program.

Three years

With a target of around 100,000 students, the program would extend loans to college juniors, seniors and graduating students nationwide.

According to CHEd officials, a similar student loan program has been in existence for the past three years.

But Roger Perez, CHEd executive director, said they had a hard time getting funds for the student loan program.

Out of their proposed P250 million budget, Congress only approved P20 million, he said, so the program was only implemented in Bicol.

"We were looking for some source (of funds), and luckily we were accommodated by the budget department, by telling us now you can make use of your P200 million," Perez said.

Payment problem

CHEd officials disclosed that the loan program did poorly mainly because they could no longer collect repayment from the students.

Under the CHEd's study now pay later scheme, students from freshmen to seniors could get loans of up to P7,200 per semester, payable in 10 years.

After graduation, CHEd officials usually lost contact with the students.

The President's SAFE 4 SR version allows students to get a loan of from P4,000 to P8,000 per semester, payable in five to 10 years.

But only those in their third and fourth years and graduating college students could avail of loans based on the Malacañang scheme.

Not of voting age

Dizon denied the target students were chosen because they were of voting age.

He said many poor students tended to dropout during their last years in college.

Unlike in the original program, schools would now be the ones to collect repayment from the students.

Dizon maintained the funding for their other scholarship programs were not affected by the huge cash outflow for SAFE 4 SR.

The funding for SAFE 4 SR alone is bigger than the total funding for all of CHEd's financial assistance programs.

For school year 2003-2004, CHEd got P377 million for its 27,597 scholars.

"It (SAFE 4SR) is not eating into any of our existing programs," Dizon said.

Masseur proves sight not needed to run fast

By Blanche S. Rivera

RODRIGO Eje, 38, has come a long way from a blind masseurs' clinic in Cubao.

Eje, the favorite masseur of Metro Manila's Catholic clergy, yesterday finished a 42-kilometer-long distance run, setting a record as the first totally blind Filipino runner to complete a full marathon.

Eje, who was runner 387, clocked 5 hours and 30 minutes when he reached the finish line at 10 a.m. He ran with Gomburza, the team of running priest Fr. Robert Reyes, starting at 4:30 a.m. from Intramuros, Manila all the way to Fort Bonifacio, Taguig.

The Pasig Heritage marathon, organized by the Save the Pasig River foundation, was Eje's first long distance run.

Not a quitter

He admits his legs were getting weak halfway through the marathon because he was trained to run at most, 25 kilometers. His drive, however, increased by the mile. He kept in mind that he could be the world's first totally blind runner to finish the full marathon.

"I never thought of quitting. All I could think of was that I could do this even if I am disabled, even if I was so tired," Eje told the INQUIRER at the Fort yesterday, where he was cheered on by other runners and given a P10,000 special cash award.

It was the first cash prize he has ever received, a pleasant surprise for someone content with a free T-shirt and the thrill from the sport.

Eje started training with Gomburza runners in October last year. Four people—Ed de Pedro, Byron Bertumen, Jun Viray and Deo Marcha—worked on his mileage. After a medical check-up, Eje ran with the four men one or two hours a day, five times a week.

They usually run within Blue Ridge subdivision in Quezon City, UP Diliman and Ateneo campus, or at the Marikina Riverbank. By 8 a.m., Eje is back at his house and ready for any scheduled home service massage or for customers at the clinic in Rustan's Cubao or Isetann, Recto. He and his wife Marosel run the Scientific Massage and Reflexology Therapy of the Visually Impaired (SMART VI), which they started four years ago with 50 blind masseurs.

Blind man runs

Eje lost his sight when he was 23. He suffered glaucoma after being exposed to 500-watt bulbs in a printing press called *People's Courier* in Manila where he worked in the morning, while he took computer courses at night.

After five months, he completely lost his sight. His family sought treatment from many doctors and when this failed, turned to quack doctors.

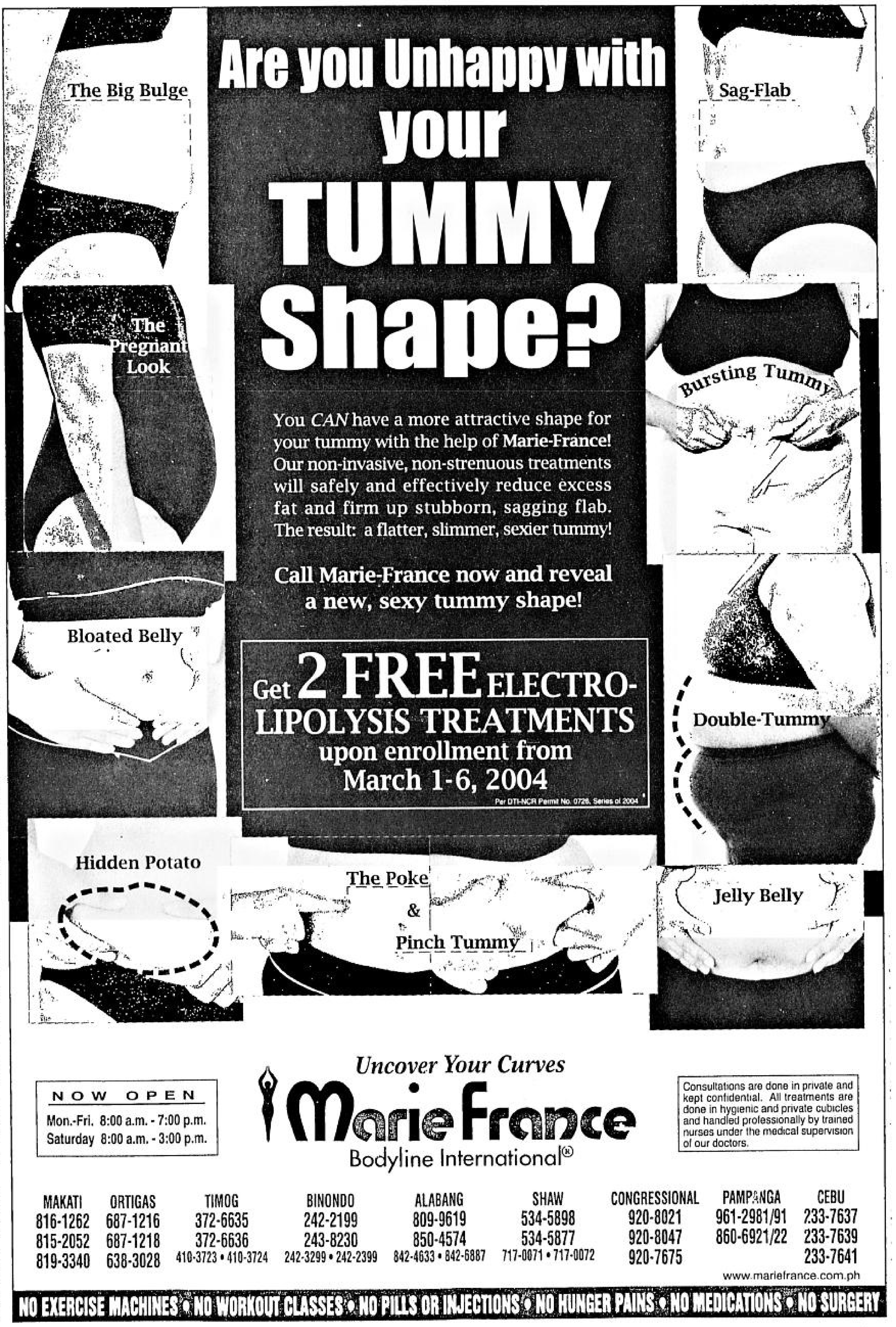
Initially bitter about his fate, Eje finally decided he wasn't going to waste his life and enrolled in a school for the blind in Proj. 4.

Reyes, now the parish priest in Proj. 4, encouraged the blind man to run. Since they first met in 1996 at the Bahay Pari of the San Carlos Seminary, Reyes has kept an eye on Eje.

The two would occasionally run but never on long distances.

Since Eje trained in October, however, he has joined the 5-km run for Industrial Valley Subdivision, the 10-km run sponsored by ABS-CBN and Ateneo Alumni, and the 16-km run in Marikina.

Eje runs holding on to a short cord held by another runner. At the marathon yesterday, his four trainers took turns on the cord, adjusting their pace with his. They would advise him if there were curves, humps or any obstacles on the road.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Witness for Fernando Poe Jr.'s defense–Dolphy?

By Christine O. Avendaño

LEGAZPI CITY—Can Dolphy be a witness for Fernando Poe Jr. in the latter's citizenship case before the Supreme Court?

Comedy king Dolphy said yesterday he had known Poe's father and often saw the old man, himself a movie actor known as Fernando Poe Sr., taking the young Ronnie to film shootings in those days. Ronnie is the presidential candidate's nickname.

"*Kasama yan sa studio. Si Ronnie maliit pa nga, kulot na kulot ang buhok* (He was with him in the studio. Ronnie was little and had very curly hair.)," Dolphy told reporters with a laugh.

"*Kasama yan sa shooting, nandun pirmi ang bata* (He would be at the shooting, the kid was always there)," he added.

Dolphy arrived here early yesterday as Poe and the opposition Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino (KNP) kicked off a two-day campaign swing through the region known to be a bailiwick of rival presidential bet Raul Roco, who hails from Bicol.

Day-off

Chatting with reporters at the Alicia Hotel here, Dolphy said it was his day-off from work and so he decided to spend it with Poe, who "was a person I love."

Asked why he was campaigning for Poe when he did not do so for another movie star, Joseph Estrada, when the latter ran for president in 1998, Dolphy said that not everyone knew that it was Poe's father who had gotten him into show business in the 1940's.

60 years

"*Kinuha ako ng tatay niya sa entablado* as an entertainer, dancer *ako hanggang nagpelikula*(His father put me on stage as an entertainer, I was a dancer until I joined the movies)," Dolphy said, adding that he has been in show business for 60 years.

Acknowledging that he owed Poe's father a debt of gratitude, Dolphy said he got the younger Poe to star in films that he [Dolphy] produced.

Paulita who?

Dolphy also said he was not aware of a Paulita Gomez in the life of Poe Sr. Gomez was the purported first wife of the elder Poe.

DOLPHY

"*Wala akong nakilalang Paulita . . . yung mother ng papa niya kilala ko si Aling Marta, nakikita ko yan sa shooting*(I did not know any Paulita . . . the mother of his father I knew as Aling Marta; I would see her at shootings)," he added.

Poe confirmed that Dolphy began his career with his late father.

"*Umpisa pa lang kasama ni kumpare ko yung tatay ko sa mga stage shows ata*(From the start, my friend had been with my father in stage shows)," Poe said.

Snubs media

But later, in Tabaco City, Poe snubbed reporters by not showing up at a press conference at the residence of former Justice Harriet Demetriou.

It was vice presidential candidate Loren Legarda who took charge of answering questions from the media.

The INQUIRER later learned that during the press conference, Poe and his party lineup had been at Demetriou's residence all along.

Poe's group was then forced to meet with the estimated 5,000 people who had gathered on the street outside the Demetriou residence to see and shake hands with the actor and other show biz personalities like Judy Ann Santos, Eddie Garcia and Dolphy.

With Job Belen and Joyce Mejillano, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

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Top kidnap gang leader finally falls in Laguna

By Christian Esguerra

AUTHORITIES arrested in San Pablo City, Laguna, on Sunday one of the country's top kidnap gang leaders who was allegedly involved in the celebrated Wakaoji kidnapping case in 1986.

Military spokesperson Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero said that Rolando Fajardo was nabbed by a composite team from the National Bureau of Investigation and the military's special forces and intelligence units.

After slipping through a police dragnet on Thursday, Fajardo had no such luck when authorities swooped down on his hideout in Barangay Del Remegio at around 7 a.m. yesterday.

Fajardo was one of several kidnap suspects with P1-million price tags on the list of the National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force. His brother Harold, also considered a top fugitive, remains at large.

The Fajardo brothers were allegedly involved in the abduction of Japanese Noboyuki Wakaoji, a Mitsui and Co. executive, from a golf course in Canlubang, Laguna, in 1986.

Rolando Fajardo was brought to Naktf headquarters at Camp Crame and is expected to be presented to the media within the week.

His arrest came three days after he and his brother escaped simultaneous raids on their respective houses in Barangays Pantay na Matanda and Pagaspas in Tanauan, Batangas last Thursday.

They managed to elude the raiding team by jumping into a creek behind one of the houses.

But the Naktf was able to track Rolando down on a tip provided by informants who earlier led authorities to the Tanauan hideouts.

Nene bares gov't plot against opposition

LEGAZPI CITY—Reelectionist Sen. Aquilino "Nene" Pimentel Jr. yesterday claimed the Macapagal administration was attempting to malign the opposition by implicating its members in alleged destabilization efforts.

Pimentel showed to reporters here a copy of an alleged military intelligence report dated Feb. 18 in which he and Senators Edgardo Angara, Vicente Sotto, Gregorio Honasan and Tessie Aquino-Oreta, as well as fellow senatorial candidates Juan Ponce Enrile and Francisco Tatad, had been listed as among the supporters of five destabilization or "threat groups."

In the report marked "secret" and titled "Plans/Activities of Threat Groups ICOW Destabilization/2004 election," Pimentel was listed as among the "personalities" under the group calling itself the People's Patriotic Movement. He was named a "political adviser" of the group.

The four other groups that "have been monitored to be actively involved in (destabilization) efforts," were identified in the report as the Council of Philippine Affairs (Copa), the People's Consultative Assembly (PCA), the Alliance for National Transformation and Solidarity (Ants), and the Association of Generals for Poe and Loren (Agpol).

The report also named Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr. and former Sen. Leticia Ramos-Shahani as being involved with some of these groups.

The report summarized the activities that the groups undertook as recently as last month, including the news conferences they had organized and meetings held to mobilize people in connection with the disqualification case lodged against opposition presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr.

In one instance, the report called attention to an alleged meeting held by San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito with members of the Philippine Guardians Brotherhood Inc., Honasan and senatorial candidate Ernesto Maceda on Feb.15 in the municipal gym of San Juan.

"Mayor Ejercito sought their support in the planned rally at the Edsa Shrine should the Supreme Court disqualify FPJ," the report said.

Pimentel flatly denied that he was involved in any destabilization plot against the government. He said he got hold of a copy of the report which he believed had been prepared by the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp). *Christine O. Avendaño*

Roco scores Poe for 'MTV-like' ads

By TJ Burgonio

ALYANSA ng Pag-asa presidential candidate Raul Roco yesterday scored movie actor Fernando Poe Jr. for resorting to "MTV-like" commercials to explain his platform of government instead of engaging in a public debate.

The former education secretary pointed out that such commercials were "make-believe productions" since they were made by directors and scriptwriters.

"The problem is, it's a make-believe production. You pay a good director, good scriptwriters. That's a make-believe world," Roco told reporters while visiting a slum area in Quezon City.

"Anybody can produce a movie if he has money and can get good scriptwriters. But this is akin to buying one's platform," said Roco, who himself had produced a number of movies, including the award-winning "Tinimbang Ka Ngunit Kulang" which won 11 Famas awards.

Roco wondered if Poe "understood the product" since the commercials were produced by scriptwriters and directors.

"That's a make-believe world. You're not aware of what's happening around you. How do you run a government without understanding the issues?" he said.

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Hold off on Japan deals, Palace urged

By Jerome Aning

THE DEPARTMENT of Foreign Affairs has urged Malacañang to defer the awarding of 50-year lease contracts to two Japanese firms which had won the bidding to develop real estate belonging to the Philippine government in Tokyo and Kobe, Japan.

Foreign affairs undersecretary for administration Franklin Ebdalin said the DFA "took cognizance" of the criticism of several senators who had called the bid awards a midnight deal and a virtual sale of the national patrimony.

"We have recommended to the Office of the President that the awarding of the contracts be deferred because we don't like the award to be perceived, especially during this election season, as a midnight deal. We can continue (the project) after elections," Ebdalin told reporters.

The DFA is a member of an inter-agency committee chaired by the finance department that awarded Japanese firms Urban Corp. and Berg Corp. P948 million worth of contracts to develop the Philippines' Nampedai property in Tokyo and two lots in Kobe under a build-lease-transfer (B-L-T) scheme.

Ebdalin said the Nampedai property, which used to house the Philippine ambassador's residence, had deteriorated and become an eyesore. The Kobe lots were turned into parking lots after the Philippine consulate there relocated to Osaka.

Sen. Manuel Villar and other senators had questioned the award of the 50-year lease contracts, saying these had to be approved by Congress. Vice President Teofisto Guingona, a former DFA secretary, said such a long lease period was equivalent to practically selling these portions of the national patrimony.

But Ebdalin stressed that the B-L-T contracts were mere development projects and, therefore, not subject to congressional approval.

He also rejected allegations that the granting of the contracts was "a virtual sale" of Philippine patrimony.

In 1990, the Supreme Court ruled that overseas properties of the Philippine government were part of the public domain and could not be disposed of by the executive branch without congressional approval.

Ebdalin pointed out that the other Philippine property located in Tokyo's Roponggi district, a portion of which currently houses the Philippine Embassy, had been turned over for development to another company under the same B-L-T scheme that also had a lifespan of 50 years.

He said the DFA just wanted to maximize the use of idle government properties overseas and generated funds to acquire more properties for diplomatic use in places where Filipino communities and interests could be better served.

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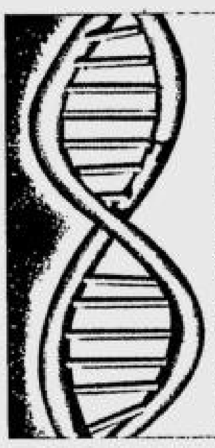

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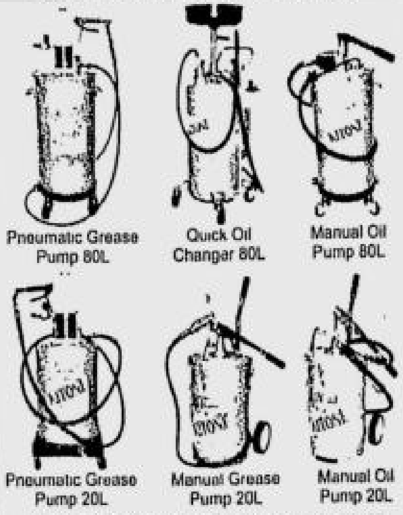

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UK renews travel warning on RP

By Jerome Aning

THE UNITED Kingdom has renewed its advisory to British citizens traveling to the Philippines, saying there was a "high general threat from terrorism and kidnapping throughout the [country]."

Philippine Foreign Secretary Delia Albert, however, belied any direct terror threats to the Philippines, saying government efforts to fight terrorism had effectively reduced the ability of terrorists to mount major strikes in the country.

The British advisory, which was issued by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on Saturday, was similar to previous precautions it had recommended. It said that there continued to be threats against western interests in the country and there was danger of collateral damage from terrorist attacks targeted at others.

The FCO also told Britons to expect heightened political tensions as the May presidential elections approached and warned them to be on the lookout for the avian flu virus, which had afflicted 10 Asian countries and killed at least 22 people.

The advisory reiterated its warning against all travel to central, southern and western Mindanao, to Basilan, Tawi-Tawi and the Sulu archipelago, "where the terrorist and kidnap threat is greatest."

It asked Britons to postpone non-essential travel to the rest of Mindanao and to take particular care in Metro Manila, throughout Palawan, and in coastal resorts and tourist centers throughout the country.

All British travellers should be "particularly vigilant in all public places and when travelling," the FCO warning said.

France and Australia have also renewed their travel advisories to the Philippines. A private travel research group in the United States recently labeled the Philippines a high-risk terrorists' target.

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Palace okays Beijing as peace talks site

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

MALACAÑANG is amenable to holding the next round of peace talks with the communists in China later this month.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said President Macapagal-Arroyo welcomed the proposal by the communist National Democratic Front to hold the next round of negotiations in Beijing on March 29.

The date coincides with the 35th anniversary of the founding of the New People's Army, the military arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines, which is under the umbrella of the NDF.

"The government peace panel is ready to face the CPP-NPA-NDF anytime because the government has long been looking for a solution to the long-standing problem of insurgency," Bunye said in an interview over RMN radio.

After sitting down in Oslo, Norway to resume their search for peace, the government and the NDF signed an accord on Feb. 13 agreeing to resume negotiations, although no specific time or place was set, in order to advance the peace process and address the root cause of the armed conflict.

The negotiations nearly collapsed after the NDF initially made the removal from international terror lists of the CPP-NPA as a condition for the talks. The impasse was broken after government and NDF negotiators agreed to tackle other issues first to keep the talks' momentum going.

RP wants to hear more of Indon security plan

By Jerome Aning

THE PHILIPPINES wants further discussions on Indonesia's proposal to set up a regional peacekeeping force in Southeast Asia.

At a press conference on Friday, Foreign Affairs Secretary Delia Albert said the peacekeeping force was "an interesting proposal."

She said it was timely considering that Manila and other governments in the region had sent or were planning to send peacekeeping missions to one another's countries.

"It is a fact that at different and limited levels, we had deployed troops, whether bilaterally or through the UN, to each other's territories to help address security issues," Albert said.

"Perhaps it is time to seriously discuss Indonesia's proposal, particularly since the UN model or even the NATO model might not be directly applicable. We are looking forward to hearing more details on Indonesia's proposal," she said.

Albert said the peacekeeping force proposal is one of the topics to be taken up at the retreat of foreign ministers from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to be held in Ha Long City, Vietnam, on March 3-5.

Speaking at the Asean-United Nations conference in Jakarta last week, Indonesian Foreign Minister Hassan Wirayuda said that with the unique security challenges facing Asean, there was a "a crying need" for such a force.

Indonesia has been promoting the idea of a regional peacekeeping force as part of the bigger Asean Security Community platform that was endorsed by Asean leaders during their summit in Bali, Indonesia last October.

Albert said the Philippines has wide experience in sending out peacekeeping forces.

The country sent troops to Aceh on a trilateral basis with Thailand. It also sent troops to Cambodia under the UN flag. Indonesia sent troops to the southern Philippines to monitor the 1996 GRP-MNLF peace agreement.

Manila is also looking forward to the deployment of Malaysian peace observers to the southern Philippines ahead of peace talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

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Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, March 1, 2004
1st Week of Lent

1st Reading: Lev 19:1-2, 11-18
Gospel: Mt 25:31-46

Jesus said to his disciples, "When the Son of Man comes in his glory with all his angels, he will sit on the throne of his Glory. All the nations will be brought before him, and as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, so will he do with them, placing the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

"The King will say to those on his right: 'Come, blessed of my Father! Take possession of the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. For I was hungry and you fed me, I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me into your house. I was naked and you clothed me. I was sick and you visited me. I was in prison and you came to see me.'

"Then the good people will ask him: 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and give you food; thirsty and give you drink, or a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to see you?' The King will answer, 'Truly, I say to you: whenever you did this to these little ones who are my brothers and sisters, you did it to me.'

"Then he will say to those on his left: 'Go, cursed people, out of my sight into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels! For I was hungry and you did not give me anything to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink; I was a stranger and you did not welcome me into your house; I was naked and you did not clothe me; I was sick and in prison and you did not visit me.'

"They, too, will ask: 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, thirsty, naked or a stranger, sick or in prison, and did not help you?' The King will answer them: 'Truly, I say to you: whatever you did not do for one of these little ones, you did not do for me.'

"And these will go into eternal punishment, but the just to eternal life."

Commentary

Some people have a recurring nightmare in which they are being judged and found totally wanting. Today's reading sounds just like such a nightmare. Earlier generations of Christians thought about "that day" (dies illa) more than people want to do now. For centuries they sang that austere sequence Dies irae (Day of wrath), meditating on that ultimate scene of judgment.

It's impossible to evade the question of ultimate judgment, however you think of it. In the sight of God what will my life amount to in the end? In the face of that ultimate question we all feel naked and uncertain. Human beings have imagined a scenario where they can start all over again: reincarnation. But the same question arises again and again. This is not how the Christian faith sees it. Christian teaching is more stark. In the words of Qoheleth, "Whether a tree falls to the south or to the north, in the place where it falls, there will it lie" (11:3). There is no coming back (Lk 16:27).

We will meet today's reading again later. What can we take from it today? Our ultimate destiny, the thing that seems farthest away, actually hangs on the things nearest to hand, the most proximate: on how we treat the Lord in "the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, the imprisoned."

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Aristide flees

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti—President Jean-Bertrand Aristide fled Haiti on Sunday, bowing to pressure from a rebellion at home and governments abroad, US and Haitian officials said.

Hundreds of angry Aristide militants armed with old rifles and pistols converged on the National Palace, the presidential seat in Port-au-Prince. Gunfire rang out in the area.

In Cap-Haitien, Haiti's second-largest city in the north that had become a base for the rebels, crowds danced and sang in the streets and a rebel commander said his fighters were ready to disarm once a new government was in place.

"Aristide's gone! Aristide's out!" rebel fighters in Cap-Haitien yelled with glee, hugging each other.

It was not immediately clear who was in charge, but Aristide's Prime Minister Yvon Neptune called a news conference early Sunday.

Haiti's two cellular telephone services stopped working Sunday morning, apparently cut.

There were reports Aristide had signed a letter of resignation before he left, which would open the way for Supreme Court Chief Justice Boniface Alexandre to take power. Constitutionally, such a move would require approval by the Haitian parliament, but it has had no power since most legislators' terms expired in January.

Aristide, Haiti's first democratically elected president in 200 years of independence, left as the rebels were 40 km from the capital and threatening to attack unless he resigned.

Added pressure came when France, Haiti's former colonizer, demanded he resign for the good of the 8 million people in the Caribbean nation. The United States then suggested he bow out.

The rebels launched the rebellion on Feb. 5 from Gonaives, 110 km northwest of Port-au-Prince. More than 100 people have died in the fighting and reprisal killings.

A senior US official said Aristide flew from Haiti on a corporate jet that left at 6:45 a.m. (1145 GMT). He was accompanied by members of his security detail but his final destination was unclear. An Associated Press reporter saw an unmarked white jet take off from Port-au-Prince's airport about that time Sunday morning.

Aristide's Cabinet minister and close adviser Leslie Voltaire told The Associated Press that Aristide was flying to the Dominican Republic and would seek asylum in Morocco, Taiwan or Panama.

In Morocco, a ranking foreign ministry official said Aristide was not heading for the North African kingdom.

Taiwanese foreign ministry spokesperson Richard Shih also said they had not received "any message or any request from the Haitian government," although he would not rule out the possibility of accepting Haiti's president.

Rebel commander Winter Etienne said the fighters—a motley group led by a former army death squad commander, one of Aristide's provincial police chiefs and a former pro-Aristide street gang—said: "We're going to put our weapons down when we've got a new government."

As he spoke, rebels rode through Cap-Haitien in trucks, waving at hundreds of people who took to the streets in celebration, dancing and singing.

But Etienne indicated it might not be over: "We will go to Gonaives, and then we will pass to St. Marc," he told The Associated Press.

St. Marc is a government-held town north of Port-au-Prince where Aristide militants have been terrorizing opponents, torching homes and executing alleged rebel sympathizers.

One diplomatic source in Port-au-Prince said Aristide signed a letter of resignation before he left. His term did not expire until February 2006. *AP*

BOMBS TO KNIVES
Wu Tseng-dong poses with a shell in his workshop on the Taiwanese island of Kinmen while surrounded by dozens of other Russian-made shells, Feb. 24. Wu uses metal from the thousands of shells fired at the island by Chinese forces for 20 years from 1958 to make high-quality kitchen knives. AFP

Millions join anti-China protest in Taiwan

TAIPEI—More than 2.5 million people joined hands to form a 500-km human chain stretching the length of Taiwan in a huge anti-China protest ahead of the island's presidential elections next month, organizers said Saturday.

The high turnout for the government-backed protest highlighting the threat posed to the island from Chinese missiles was likely to boost the reelection chances of President Chen Shui-bian, analysts said.

There was no independent confirmation of the figures but the opposition Kuomintang (KMT) disputed the size of the turnout.

The show of strength was designed to galvanize Chen's supporters before the March 20 ballot, with polls showing him lagging behind his sole challenger, Lien Chan of the KMT.

Chen, of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), was at the organizers' headquarters at Miaoli, northern Taiwan, for the "Hand in Hand" demonstration. He linked hands with former KMT president and pro-independence campaigner Lee Teng-hui.

"This is a historic event crossing ethnic, geographic, partisan, gender and age boundaries. There is no minority or majority in Taiwan. Taiwan is an integral," he said.

"Let us hold our hands, a simple but warm act, to tell the world and all people who care about Taiwan that 'we love Taiwan and want peace'." The protest, running from Keelung in the north to Pingtung in the south of the island, was called on the anniversary of Feb. 28, 1947 when thousands of native Taiwanese were killed by KMT troops from the mainland in a bloody riot against the new rulers of China.

The episode poisoned relations between the KMT and native Taiwanese for decades.

Television pictures showed crowds at least 10 deep at points on the route through Taiwan as pro-government supporters joined hands at 2:28 p.m.

In the capital Taipei, thousands wearing "Yes Taiwan" caps gathered at the 2/28 peace memorial park, named after the 1947 incident, for speeches.

Taiwanese communities were also due to form human chains in Dallas, Houston, Seattle, Toronto and Vancouver, the organizers said.

The opposition KMT has accused the DPP of creating an ethnic divide and organized its own show of support with leader Lien part of a group carrying "peace torches" into a rally in the southern city of Kaohsiung.

The torches had been taken on a two-week jog around the island by supporters. *AFP*

Iraqis miss charter deadline as deaths mount

BAGHDAD—Iraq's leaders missed Saturday a deadline to draft a temporary constitution but pledged to work on, as fresh deaths marked what has been the bloodiest month since major hostilities ended almost a year ago.

While the leaders were determined to reach an agreement, divisions over the role of Islam and women in Iraq's transitional law have exposed religious and ethnic fault lines within the US-appointed Governing Council.

"Failure is not an option, we have to get this document signed and dusted and finished," council member Muwaffiq Rubbai told a late evening news conference in Baghdad.

"We are going to have a long night, this is going to be a really long night," said Rubbai, a representative from the majority Shiite Muslim community. "We have no choice, we must do it."

Independent Sunni member, Samer Sumaydah, said he was "very optimistic" that the temporary constitution, aimed at seeing Iraq through a transition period into next year, would be finalized soon.

His optimism was a sharp contrast to Friday's talks, which were marked by a walkout by several members in what was the council's first major row.

The deadline was set to clear the way for a June 30 transfer of sovereignty from the US-led coalition to an Iraqi interim authority.

But with disagreements over Islam, the role of women and the minutiae of setting up a federal state, the parties have become increasingly polarized around their religious beliefs and ethnic backgrounds.

In a show of force as the leaders were meeting, almost 2,000 members of a militia loyal to a young firebrand cleric marched through the northern oil city of Kirkuk, a hotbed of ethnic tensions between Arabs, Kurds and Turkmen.

"Kirkuk belongs to all its residents and not just one ethnic group," said a spokesperson for the militia of the radical Shiite cleric Moqtada Sadr, whose base is in southern Iraq.

Sadr renewed threats at Friday prayers to spark a revolt if Iraq's US overseer Paul Bremer continued to oppose including Islam in the temporary constitution.

"I call on all believers to remain prepared, while awaiting orders from the Hawza (Shiite religious authority), to confront the occupation," he said.

Members of Iraq's Turkmen community were conspicuous by their absence in Kirkuk on Saturday after they called a general strike, closing down shops and restaurants in a protest aimed at drawing attention to their political rights.

An AFP correspondent said that even police officers from the 250,000-strong Turkmen community, Iraq's third largest ethnic group, stopped work.

In Baghdad, a group of Turkmen on hunger strike camped in front of the main military headquarters and clashed with US troops. *AFP*

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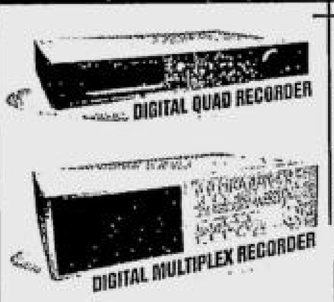
Report: Saddam regime stole billions from oil-for-food deal

WASHINGTON—Saddam Hussein's regime—in cooperation with business partners in several countries—systematically looted billions of dollars from the UN oil-for-food program, the New York Times reported Sunday, citing former officials and documents provided by the Iraqi Governing Council.

Officials who supervised the skimming operation told the Times the money from kickbacks by companies doing business with Iraq was deposited in banks in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and other countries.

Iraq's suppliers included Russian factories, Arab trade brokers, European manufacturers and state-owned companies from China and the Middle East, the daily said.

The daily estimated that Saddam's government would have collected as much as $2.3 billion of the $32.6 billion worth of contracts it signed since mid-2000, when the kickback system began. *AFP*



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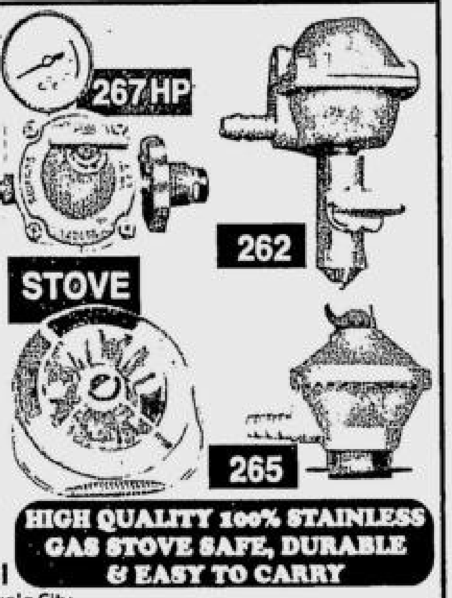

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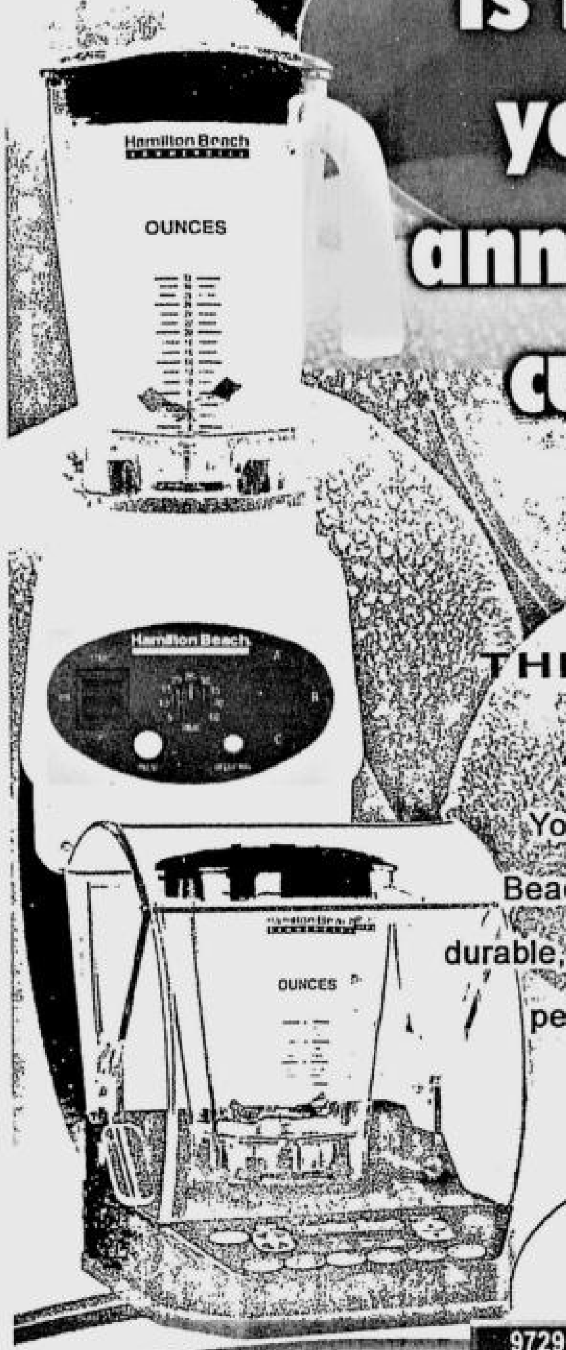

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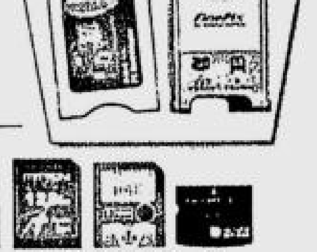

Japan confirms 3rd outbreak of bird flu

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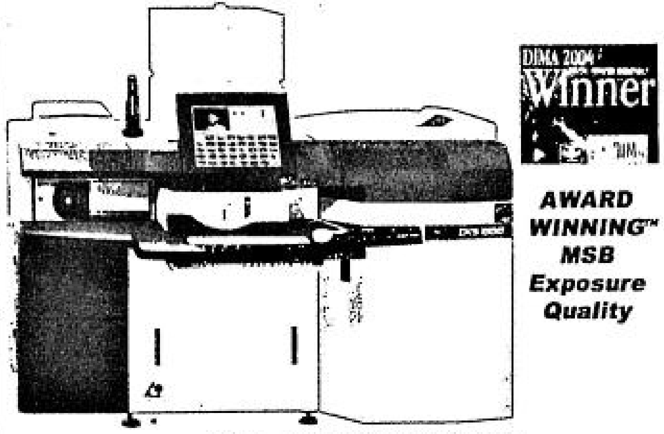

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TOKYO—Japan's agriculture minister on Sunday slammed a senior poultry industry executive for failing to report the deaths of tens of thousands of chickens on his farm, where officials have confirmed the country's third outbreak of bird flu.

About 67,000 of the 200,000 chickens at the farm in southwestern Japan died in the past week, but Hajimu Asada failed to alert authorities and continued to ship live chickens, meat and eggs to customers. Media reports said officials learned of the outbreak from an anonymous phone call that prompted an investigation.

"It is terribly regrettable that the report (of the outbreak) came so late," particularly because Asada is deputy chairman of the Japan Poultry Association, Agriculture Minister Yoshiyuki Kamei said in comments to public broadcaster NHK.

Local media quoted Asada, chairman of Asada Nosan, which runs the farm, as saying it had decided to ship live chickens as much as two months ahead of schedule after noticing the birds were dying en masse.

"I received a report from the farm saying it had decided to push up shipments. Deciding that the dead birds would not be accepted (by customers), they probably decided to ship them out earlier than planned," the Asahi newspaper quoted Asada as saying Saturday.

Asada added that he would take responsibility for the decision, the Asahi said.

The local government confirmed the outbreak in a statement Sunday after test results showed the birds were infected with an H5 strain of the virus.

Results of further testing expected later Sunday were expected to show whether the chickens were infected with the deadly H5N1 strain that has killed seven people in Thailand and 15 in Vietnam, a Kyoto prefectural (state) official said on condition of anonymity.

Authorities also ordered a cull of the farm's remaining birds to help contain the disease, the statement said.

But officials feared bird flu had already spread in southwestern Japan after 25 chickens at a slaughterhouse in neighboring Hyogo prefecture tested positive for the virus in initial tests Saturday.

Five of those came from the infected Kyoto farm, along with 9,000 other birds. The remaining 20 came from different suppliers and are believed to have contracted the illness at the slaughterhouse.

Definitive tests are being conducted to confirm if the birds at the slaughterhouse had bird flu and if so, which strain.

Authorities also suspected last week that a chicken kept as a pet at an elementary school in western Nagano prefecture had bird flu. Initial test results were contradictory and a final judgment was expected Sunday.

Japan has confirmed two other outbreaks. More than 28,000 birds were destroyed in Yamaguchi prefecture, on the southwestern tip of the country's main island, after the disease was confirmed there in January.

Avian flu generally only infects birds, although it has spread to people in a few isolated cases.

China, Cambodia, Japan, Indonesia, Laos, Pakistan, South Korea, Thailand, Taiwan and Vietnam have been hit by bird flu. Pakistan and Taiwan reported a milder strain of the virus.

AP

A VIETNAMESE girl looks
district in the northern pro
Stamping out Asia's deadly
shattered poultry flocks wil
most of it shouldered by na
animal health experts said.

3 Palestinians die in Israeli missile attack

GAZA CITY—Three Palestinians, including an Islamic Jihad top leader and militant, were killed Saturday when an Israeli helicopter blew up a car near Gaza City, medical and security sources said.

Security sources said an Apache helicopter, backed by an F-16 fighter jet, fired three missiles at around 7:45 p.m. in the Saftawi neigborhood just north of Gaza City.

The Subaru car in which the three victims were traveling was completely destroyed, while nearby houses and other vehicles were damaged.

Medics said 10 people were wounded in the strike, one of whom was a 6-year-old child, whose condition was said to be critical.

Security officials named the victims as Mahmud Jhouda, 30, a top leader of the Al-Quds Brigades, the armed wing of the radical Islamic Jihad group.

Fellow militant Amin al-Dahduh, 42, and his 20-year-old cousin Ayman, who was not affiliated to the group, were also killed in the strike, they said.

AFP

6-nation talks on nuclear cr

BEIJING—Delegations to six-nation talks on North Korea's nuclear program started leaving Beijing Sunday, a day after the discussions fizzled out, making little substantial progress.

As the Japanese and South Korean teams packed up after the four-day talks, China was eager to put a positive spin on the meeting which ended with only a vague agreement to establi working-level groups and reconvene som before June.

"Despite a harsh Beijing spring wind, Chi North Korea, the United States, South Korea, Jap and Russia used reason and wisdom in the seco round of six-party talks to give new hope to t

EASY RIDER
A woman rides a unicycle at a park in Shanghai Feb. 28. The unicycle was designed several years ago by Chinese inventor Li Yongli who called it "the No. 1 vehicle in the world." REUTER

MCLE SEMINAR FOR LAWYERS

Bar Matter No. 850 and its implementing rules provide, among others, that failure to comply with the Mandatory Continuing Legal Education (MCLE)'s 36-unit requirement at the end of the compliance period shall be a cause for listing a lawyer as a delinquent member and consequently, he shall not be permitted to practice law. The first compliance period which started on APRIL 15, 2001, is about to end on APRIL 14, 2004.

For purposes of complying with said requirement, we are sponsoring the following Lecture Series:

Date/Time	MCLE Credit Units/ Subject Classification	Lecturer	Subject
March 12, 2004 1:30 - 4:45 pm	(3) Legal Ethics	Justice Ruben T. Reyes	Problem Areas in Legal Ethics
March 13, 2004 8:00 - 10:00 am	(2) Trial & Pre-trial Skills	Justice Noel G. Tijam	Trial Techniques
March 13, 2004 10:15 - 12:15 pm	(2) Trial & Pre-trial Skills	Justice Noel G. Tijam	Pre-Trial Skills: Civil and Criminal Cases
March 13, 2004 1:00 - 3:00 pm	(2) MCLE-Prescribed Subject: Law as a Means of Social Control	Justice Diosdado M. Peralta	Rebellion: Causes and Consequences
March 13, 2004 3:15 - 6:15 pm	(3) Legal Ethics	Justice Hector L. Hofileña	Updates in Legal Ethics
March 19, 2004 1:00 - 4:00 pm	(3) Alternative Dispute Resolution	Dean Custodio O. Parlade	International and Domestic Arbitration
March 19, 2004 4:15 - 6:15 pm	(2) Legal Writing & Oral Advocacy	Justice Hugo E. Gutierrez	Legal Writing
March 20, 2004 10:00 - 12:00 pm	(2) MCLE-Prescribed Subject: Technology and the Law	Justice Regalado E. Maambong	Essentials of Forensic Ballistics, Questioned Documents & Fingerprinting
March 20, 2004 1:00 - 3:00 pm	(2) Updates in Substantive & Procedural Laws & Jurisprudence	Justice Edilberto G. Sandoval	Updates in Criminal Law
March 20, 2004 3:15 - 5:15 pm	(2) Updates in Substantive & Procedural Laws & Jurisprudence	Dean Froilan M. Bacungan	Updates in Labor Law
March 26, 2004 1:00 - 4:00 pm	(3) Updates in Substantive & Procedural Laws & Jurisprudence	Justice Regalado E. Maambong	Updates in Constitutional Law and Election Law
March 26, 2004 4:15 -6:15 pm	(2) MCLE-Prescribed Subject: Environmental Law	Prof. Oswald B. Lorenzo	Environmental Law
March 27, 2004 8:00 - 10:00 am	(2) Legal Writing & Oral Advocacy	Justice Magdangal M. De Leon	Oral Advocacy
March 27, 2004 10:15 - 12:15 pm	(2) Alternative Dispute Resolution	Prof. Mario E. Valderrama	Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)
March 27, 2004 1:00 - 3:00 pm	(2) International Law	Atty. Ronaldo P. Ledesma	Practice and Procedure in the Bureau of Immigration & Updates in Deportation and Immigration Laws
March 27, 2004 3:15 - 5:15 pm	(2) Updates in Substantive and Procedural Laws & Jurisprudence	Judge Ed Vincent S. Albano	Updates in Remedial Law
TOTAL	36		

Date/Time: Friday: March 12, 19 & 26, 2004 from 1:00 to 6:15 p.m.
Saturday: March 13, 20 & 27, 2004 from 8:00 to 5:15 p.m.
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t ducklings in Thanh Oai
vince of Ha Tay Feb. 29.
bird flu and restocking its
cost at least US$500 million,
ions battling the disease,
REUTERS

Bush intensifies hunt for Bin Laden

NEW YORK—US President George W. Bush has approved a plan to intensify the effort to capture or kill Osama bin Laden, The New York Times reported on Saturday on its website, quoting senior administration and military officials.

It said the plan would apply new forces and new tactics to the task of hunting down Bin Laden, and take advantage of better intelligence and improving weather along the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The main force in the new effort is Task Force 121, a covert commando team of Special Operations forces and CIA officers that was involved in the capture of ousted Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in December, the Times said.

The force is gradually shifting its resources to Afghanistan to step up the search for Bin Laden, accused mastermind of the Sept.11, 2001, attacks on the United States, and the ousted Afghan Taliban leader, Mullah Omar, it said.

"Under the new plan, officials say, the 11,000 American forces in Afghanistan are changing their tactics," the Times said. "Rather than carrying out raids and returning to their bases, small groups will now remain in Afghan villages for days at a time, handing out various forms of aid and conducting patrols."

US officials hope such tactics would allow them to receive and act on intelligence within hours to crack Bin Laden's support network, the paper said. The technique helped the US forces capture Saddam.

"With a great deal at stake strategically, symbolically and politically, Mr. Bush and his national security team have repeatedly met in recent months to refine the new approach, and it appears to have been approved in the last two months," the Times said.

"White House officials will not say exactly when, emphasizing that the hunt for Mr. Bin Laden never stopped, though clearly the effort lost momentum." *Reuters*

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isis fizzle out

h peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear is-
ie sue," the leading People's Daily said in an editorial.

The most optimistic result of the talks was that all sides were able to hold "substantial discussions" in a cool and calm atmosphere, it added.

All sides also recommitted themselves to a non-nuclear Korean Peninsula, it said. *AFP*

oblessness dogs . Africa 10 years fter apartheid

E TOWN—Cassius
eti, 37, is dirty, tired and
gry and embodies post-
theid South Africa's fail-
to effectively tackle un-
loyment, which unoffi-
figures say could be as
as 40 percent.

laseti, dressed in a dirty
irt and torn trousers, is
pondent as he recounts
travails in a park out-
South Africa's parlia-
t in Cape Town.

I have tried and tried, but
was able to get was short
k as a laborer. If you do
have a matric (matricula-
) certificate or a universi-
egree, then no one will
loy you," he says.

oblessness has become a
lle for the African Na-
al Congress (ANC) gov-
nent, in power since the
multiracial elections
e held in April 1994.

ccording to the latest
rnment figures, about
million people, or 31.2
ent of economically ac-
citizens in South
a—most of them
k—do not hold jobs.

nofficial figures sug-
it could be as high as
ercent.

recent survey by state
dcaster SABC found
90 percent of 3,500 re-
ndents interviewed
highly concerned about unemployment.

Opposition parties say the ruling party's failure to create jobs has caused an unusually high crime rate.

The South African Police Service annual report said that 47.4 murders were committed per 100,000 people between April 2002 and March 2003, or a total of 21,230.

The ANC has fended off criticism, saying it inherited an unbalanced, racially skewed economy when it took charge in 1994, and that much had been done to reduce poverty and create jobs.

"The economy in 1994 was in an advanced state of decline," Trade and Industry Minister Alec Erwin, a member of the ANC, told journalists recently.

"In terms of human development, the weakness in the economy resulted in declining living standards, high levels of racial inequality as well as high levels of poverty," he said.

When the ANC came to power under then president Nelson Mandela in 1994, it began to plough funds into areas that were neglected by the apartheid government and to uplift the lot of blacks and the so-called "coloureds" (mixed race) who faced decades of oppression and were economically marginalized. *AFP*

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OPINION

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Businessmen's agenda

EDITORIAL

BEWARE of businessmen bearing gifts, especially of the recycled kind. Last week, the so-called Presidential Business Agenda for the First 100 Days was presented, to some fanfare. Some presidential candidates immediately welcomed the four proposals at the center of the agenda: the legalization of *jueteng*, a 50-percent cut in pork barrel funds, continued public executions and a tax on text messages.

We realize that, by its very nature, the agenda is short-term: It consists of objectives that are meant to be achieved between June 30 and mid-October this year. We cannot help but think, however, that the mountain of big business has labored mightily, only to bring forth a mouse.

The four proposals are a strange mix. Two deal with generating additional revenue for the government, one with cutting government spending. A fourth relates directly to law and order problems, or more specifically, to perceptions of law and order. Three of the four require not only legislative cooperation, but a mastery of the give-and-take of lawmaking. One will be certain to ignite a consumer revolt, another the high-profile opposition of religious groups.

All told, the four proposals are a recipe for presidential frustration. The agenda will not give the new president a head start, but a false one.

Let's start with the least problematic of the lot: a halving in pork barrel allocations. In theory, this is something devoutly to be wished for. We cannot understand how a P200-million allocation for each senator and a P50-million fund for each congressman can be considered essential to governance.

But lawmakers newly elected or returned to both chambers will be loath to part with the money they think already belongs to them. If the budget secretary keeps a tight hold on the government purse, using the bureaucracy's processes to slow down the fund releases, we can realistically expect a less-than-cooperative Congress, at the exact time it is needed to turn the other proposals into law. We think reducing the pork barrel is in order, but it cannot be done in the first 100 days of the next administration.

The legalization of *jueteng*, the illegal numbers game that led to the downfall of President Joseph Estrada, requires an enormous amount of political will on the part of both the newly-elected President and the new leadership in Congress. It is possible that drug money has now usurped *jueteng*'s pride of place as the top source of campaign funding, especially on the local level. But even in its diminished state, it still has enough clout to finance resistance against its legalization.

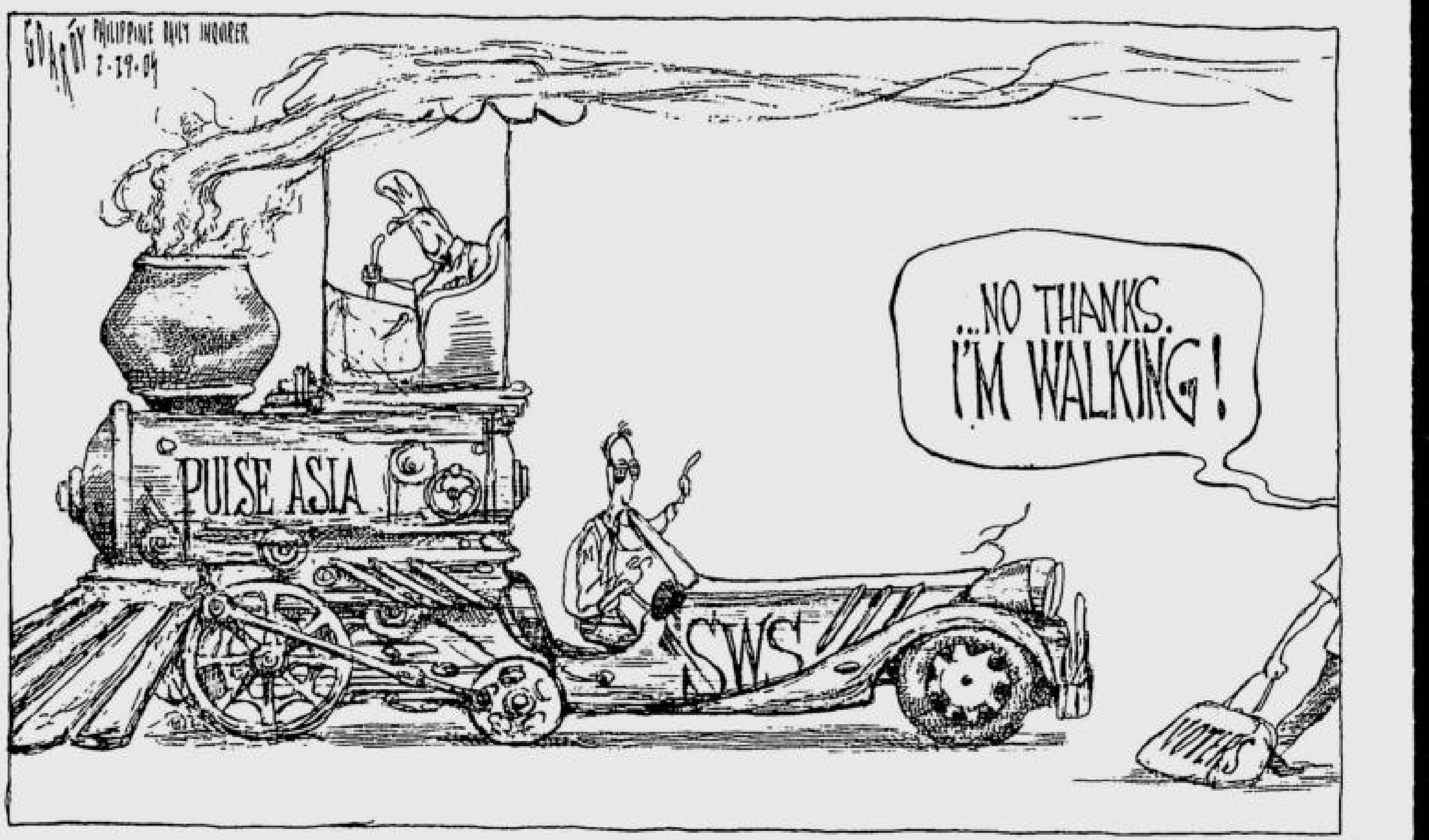
Again, we consider the merits of the proposal as separate from its practical aspects. We think that legalization will fail if given a 100-day deadline, for the simple reason that in the first few months of any first session, leadership concerns dominate legislative discussion: who gets which committee, who becomes Speaker or Senate president, even which party to finally jump to.

If the idea behind the agenda's *jueteng* proposal is to show that the President elected in May has the power to unify a fractious nation, realpolitik will quickly show that that idea was mistaken.

The tax on text messages will not sit well with a cell phone-obsessed country. Of the three proposals that require legislative action, this seems the most doable—but only in relative terms. Organized opposition to the proposed tax should be expected and, with more than a quarter of the national population owning at least one cell phone, can only be considerable.

The proposal we have the most difficulty with is the appeal to continue with public executions. As we have pointed out time and time again, our judicial system cannot guarantee that every single death sentence meets the strictest possible standards of evidence. We understand where the business leaders are coming from: A policy inconsistently applied cannot possibly be effective. But in the absence of convincing proof that capital punishment deters other crimes, how can they even think that continued public executions will lead to more law and order? The death penalty is a placebo, and they ought to know that.

In sum: The problem with the businessmen's agenda is that it isn't political enough. Politics, need we remind them, is the art of the possible.



Cancel franchises of striking jeepneys

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THIS administration, always knuckling under the threat by lawbreakers to sow disorder in the streets, is trying to prevent the planned strike by jeepney drivers today, most likely by trying to appease them by giving in to some of their demands, principally a hefty increase in passenger fares, which is not justified. But a jeepney strike can really be a blessing in disguise for urban areas choked and polluted by jeepney traffic. It can be an opportunity for the government, specifically the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) to recover its nerve and restore sanity in the streets.

The jeepney, converted from theWorld War II jeep by Filipino ingenuity, provided a transport necessity after Liberation when there was practically no transportation system. The jeepney boosted entrepreneurship: mechanical and body repair shops reconditioned and remodeled discarded military vehicles. Families with a little extra cash bought jeepneys and rented them out to drivers. The enterprise became so lucrative that some families have whole fleets of jeepneys. A homecoming Filipino contract worker from the Middle East usually bought a jeepney for his family, aside from the ubiquitous karaoke, which is a standard *pasalubong*.

The jeepney (or the tricycle) is heaven-sent for the indolent Filipino. The owner gets a sure income from his vehicle daily even if he just sleeps in the house and makes babies. The driver's take-home pay is what remains of the day's passenger fares after he pays the rent, the fuel and the oil. But he prefers it because it involves a minimum of driving and a maximum of sleeping and snacking and chatting. Yes, the drivers actually spend more time sleeping as they wait in line for passengers at the jeepney terminals than time actually driving. Go to any jeepney terminal and you will see all the empty jeepneys parked there with the drivers either sleeping inside or eating or drinking in a nearby sidewalk stall. And the driver has no boss to chastise him for sleeping on the job. He is his own boss. As long as he pays the day's rent, the owner doesn't care what he does.

The mechanical and body shops in Cavite and other areas also make a fortune recycling junk vehicles into jeepneys. There is such a big demand for them. Even non-jeeps were remodeled to make them look as if they were originally jeeps.

But for all its usefulness when it was needed, and for all the romantic notion that its decorations and paint are folk art, the jeepney has become too numerous and a pest. Like the human population, there is now an explosion of vehicles—jeepneys, tricycles, buses, private cars and vans—in the urban areas while there is hardly any increase in roads.

With this vehicle boom without a corresponding boom in the construction of more roads and parking areas, where do you put all the additional vehicles? In the already crowded streets.

To make matters worse, the LTFRB kept issuing franchises for buses and jeepneys (and local government units for tricycles) without determining how many vehicles the streets can hold, or how many passenger vehicles the commuters actually need. They just kept churning out more and more franchises simply because they mean more fees for the agency, and more grease money for the fixers and officials and employees.

As further proof of the government's lack of foresight, when the government's own bus company went bankrupt due to mismanagement—resulting in the loss of hundreds of millions of pesos—and there was a shortage of buses, the government panicked. It encouraged businessmen to import those big, lumbering, second-hand buses, even giving them easy loans for the purpose. We now see these half-empty buses choking Edsa. More of them strangle smaller streets along with the jeepneys and tricycles. We now have an over-population of buses, jeepneys and tricycles.

When there is an overpopulation of chickens in a poultry farm, what do you get? *Peste*, avian flu! When you have an overpopulation of pigs in a hog farm, what do you get? Hoof-and-mouth disease. When there is an overpopulation of prisoners in jail, what do you get? An epidemic of diarrhea and skin disease among them. It is the law of nature. Whenever there is an excess of animals of any species, nature inflicts an epidemic on them to reduce their numbers and maintain a balance. The same is true with transportation. When there is too much, they should be trimmed down to maintain balance.

When the LRT and Metrorail were set up, the LTFRB should have reduced the franchises for jeepneys on Rizal Avenue and for buses on Edsa. It did not; it didn't want to lose the fees. And it was engulfed by inertia and the fear of antagonizing the transport sector. So we have the present mess in our streets which is costing us billions of pesos every day in lost time, lost opportunities, wasted fuel and health problems because of polluted air.

If there is an illegal strike, the LTFRB should cancel the franchises of strikers since that would be a violation of their franchise. That would reduce the number of jeepneys and buses in the urban streets. Give them franchises to operate in the provinces where there is an extreme shortage of transportation. That should restore sanity in the streets.

* * *

TODAY'S JOKE: Reporter to presidential candidate Eddie Gil: You boasted you will pay the Philippine foreign debt but you can't even pay your own debts to a hotel and tricycle drivers?

Gil: I said foreign debt, not local debt.

Fiesta

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

ARCHBISHOP Gaudencio Rosales has a complaint. That is that this country has never learned from Edsa. "Edsa was a call for change and repentance. Unfortunately, like most things we do, we have made Edsa only a fiesta." All of 18 years have not been enough for us to free ourselves from the evils of the Marcos dictatorship. That is because we have not learned the discipline and responsibility that come with freedom.

The complaint is valid enough. But the first question is: Who was there to teach the lesson?

As I suggested last Wednesday, the post-Edsa government taught only a lesson in how not to build a new world. If we have not learned the discipline and responsibility that come with freedom, it is no great thanks to our leaders who have shown a largely negative example. Edsa was a historic opportunity to turn things around, to punish the evildoers, to right wrongs, to do the exact opposite of what Marcos did. To wreak the "personal revenge," as Jose Borje puts it, of putting the kids in school, ridding the streets of beggars and bringing back song and laughter to the mouths of the oppressed. Unleashing vigilantes and cultists on the populace, whetting the appetites of new cronies, and rewarding the former torturers and punishing the tortured anew do not offer lessons in the discipline and responsibility that come with freedom.

The second question is even more important, though far more subtle. That question is: What is the lesson to begin with?

Our issue of the INQUIRER last Thursday which carried the headline of Rosales' complaint fortuitously suggests that Edsa's lesson was flawed. Below the story is a huge picture showing Corazon Aquino, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Fidel Ramos flashing the Laban sign. GMA of course was never part of Edsa, I or even II. Ramos was part of the first Edsa largely by accident. He was Marcos' PC chief and though he fell out of grace for showing less than canine devotion to his boss than Fabian Ver et al., he never figured in the campaign against Marcos. He fell in league with RAM also largely by accident. And if it weren't for the legions that massed at Edsa, he would not now be claiming a third of the franchise of Edsa. The other two claimants being Cory and Jaime Cardinal Sin.

Of course a day earlier, the INQUIRER also carried a picture of kids sitting on the statues of Ninoy Aquino and Evelio Javier, true heroes both, who had lit the fuse on Edsa. But there and then you see what's wrong with the lesson of Edsa from the start. If you look at Edsa not just as the events that immediately preceded the end of dictatorship but the entire struggle against it, then the story of Edsa as it has been taught since 1986 leaves out a whole array of major characters. While it does right to praise those who helped mightily to spark it, it does wrong to overlook those who put the explosives underneath the condemned building known as martial law. Those are the people whose names appear only on the Bantayog ng mga Bayani. They do not appear in history books, or the ones officially written about Edsa.

Last Friday, one day after our story on Rosales' complaint, we had a story as well about Jose W. Diokno. It was his death anniversary last week, and even GMA came out to proclaim him to have been one of the titans of the past. Well, this titan has not a single street to his name, Lito Atienza, the Manila mayor, deeming Howard Taft to have done more for Manila than Jose Diokno. But at least Diokno has gotten some recognition from government—one may not say his peers, he has few peers and they are not to be found in government. Not so the other heroes of Edsa in the broadest sense of that word, the people, many of them barely crossing the threshold of life, who raised a fist at martial law and died for it. The people who made their kin weep at the weight of their loss while lifting off the yoke their country bore pitifully.

The transformation of Edsa into a fiesta did not begin with blithe songs like "Magkaisa" and "Handog ng Pilipino sa Mundo" and even blither concepts about the Filipino's capacity to wage bloodless, garland-powered, revolutions. It began with the interpretation of Edsa as a phenomenon that began with the death of Ninoy Aquino, as a campaign that was prosecuted by his grieving widow, as a revolution that culminated in a military mutiny aided by the people. Not as a phenomenon that began even before martial law, with the activists protesting the dying of the light—Marcos' dictatorial tendencies were already evident then. Not as a struggle that was prosecuted by those who went to the hills or hid underground, or those who stayed aboveground but waged silent protest against the regime. Not as a revolution that ended with the people defying Marcos' armed might and reclaiming their power and right to rule.

What lesson does the first interpretation teach, other than that it is the easiest thing in the world to fight tyranny, all you need is a martyr or two to capture the people's imagination and spark mutinous rallies? What lesson does it teach but that revolution is a picnic, all you have to do is wait for a charismatic or tragic figure to come along and take you for the ride? What lesson does it teach other than that it is the safest thing in the world to raise a fist at tyranny, all you have to do is march in numbers armed with flowers and rosary beads and songs and stare down the enemy?

You do not see the long night and the people who kept vigil through it, risking the world and losing their loved ones in the process, you will not learn the discipline and responsibility that come with freedom. You will not know the price of freedom.

You will think Edsa is just a, well, fiesta.

Cramming won't work

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

IN THE RECENT TV interview by Star publisher and columnist Max Soliven of presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr., he vowed "to be in control and be the decision-maker" if elected. The inference is that he would consider his numerous advisers' input, but in the end he would be the "decision-maker." But the problem is that, as the recent interview by Australian journalist Kimina Lyall revealed, FPJ couldn't even answer when queried what he considered "the most significant event in recent Philippine history," confessing that he wasn't much into politics as "in my younger days it was all movies."

Does FPJ now say that he can cram everything he needs to know of this toughest of all jobs, including the intricacies of world economics and finance? But he and his advisers know cramming doesn't work even for bar examinees, and that "sincerity" is not enough. My mailman is most sincere but he's not running for president. Or as a market vendor put it, as quoted in last Sunday's hard-hitting editorial of Baguio City's Midland Courier, *"Hindi naman ako tarantado, eh, bakit ko iboboto si* Fernando Poe? *Mas magaling ako diyan, nakatapos ako ng* high school. *Pareho siguro kaming hindi makabasa ng metro ng* [electricity]."

* * *

To avoid becoming the puppet of his advisers, a president has to have extensive knowledge of various aspects of governance and the willingness to study and keep studying the problems, in order to make good, sound decisions. This was the difficulty of former President Estrada—he not only did not understand what was going on in his administration, he had no willingness to study and learn; 10 minutes after opening the Cabinet meeting, Erap would leave it to be run by his executive secretary. But at least Erap had held various high posts; whereas FPJ was an actor all his life. An FPJ presidency would be an unmitigated disaster.

* * *

By their fruit you shall know them, said the good book. The electorate gets a good glimpse this election of the fruits of the distinguished Romulo family with two third-generation Romulos, children of Carlos P. Romulo's nephew, Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo and his wife, the former Lovely Tecson, running for the House of Representatives; from their impressive credentials, they would be assets to Congress. Roman Romulo, who turned 37 last Saturday, is running for Pasig City's lone district, while Berna Romulo-Puyat, 34, is a candidate in Quezon City's first district, its biggest. Roman is a lawyer and economics graduate from UP and is now senior associate of the Sycip Salazar Hernandez & Gatmaitan Law Office, where he handled special corporate projects, financing and services, and had extensive experience in contract-drafting and review. His expertise should be handy in the House where franchises emanate.

* * *

Berna Romulo Puyat fuses two famous families, the Romulos and the Puyats, being married to lawyer David Puyat, the late Sen. Gil Puyat's grandson. The mother of a boy and a girl, she is a 1994 magna cum laude master's degree holder in economics from UP, where she finished her bachelor's degree in economics cum laude in 1990, and is a member of two honor societies. Berna teaches at the UP School of Economics, runs a radio program and is also economic consultant to the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, the DSWD and Habitat for Humanity, among others. But just as important, she got inside training in legislative work as researcher and writer in the office of her father, former Senator Romulo, where she helped draft various important laws. She'll be an asset to the House.

* * *

Denis Murphy, who works with the Urban Poor Associates, recently wrote an incisive article in this paper about two visiting Jesuit priests who were appalled at the indifference of the rich of this country "to the poor living right beside them" and "they wanted to know where people here looked for hope." To my mind that hope lies in giving the poor some education and a reasonable degree of training so that they could get decent jobs. This is the message that another Jesuit, the saintly Fr. Pierre Tritz, has been hammering at for the past 50 years here: that only with training and education can the poor hope to break the cycle of poverty that has gripped their families for generations.

Toward this end, in 1974 Father Tritz founded the Erda Foundation that strives to keep children of impoverished families in school with financial and material help, so that they don't add to the high dropout statistics. In 1994 he opened Erda Tech in Pandacan, which trains high school kids from Metro Manila's poorest families in technical skills, so that they could immediately get employed after their five-year high school education. Investing in scholarships for Erda's kids is certainly the best investment in hope for this country. Call Father Tritz's office at 564-1857 or 732-3198 on how you can help his students.

* * *

It's my pleasure to inform Father Tritz's legion of friends and admirers that he is back in the country after three months' convalescence in France. He is at the Hospital of the Infant Jesus in Sampaloc, Manila, where he was night-duty chaplain for 25 years, for various treatments he still needs; but otherwise he is fine and raring to resume his duties at Erda. Father Tritz had a bad fall in France last Oct. 13 and needed medical treatment for a head clot, which became rather extended. Those months were most difficult for this humanitarian, who will turn 90 this September, as it was, to quote his letter, "the first time that I was really sick in my life." He added that "it was painful, but being surrounded by some 80 people (in the French border town hospital), I did realize that it is important to understand sickness and become compassionate." Welcome back, Father Tritz, but do take it easy.

The visit

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Noralyn Mustafa

NOW what is she up to this time?

We first learned about it in a television newscast that was, as broadcast news go, too brief to satisfy our need to know the why and wherefore of it, but the following day, there it was in the INQUIRER, important enough, as indeed it was, to merit the top space in the Second Front Page with a headline of appropriate point value to catch any reader's attention: "Votes for freedom deal bared." (PDI, 2/23/04)

But more attention-getting was the accompanying photo. There they were—left to right, Speaker Jose de Venecia, jailed former ARMM Gov. Nur Misuari and newly appointed national security adviser Norberto Gonzales, each trying to out-grin the Cheshire cat, with hands clasped one on top of the other, in rather crude imitation of the Three Musketeers. It was pretty obvious that the deal was so satisfactory to all concerned it had to be sealed with the vow of "one for all; all for one!" or something to that effect.

But at whose expense?

According to the story, "President Macapagal-Arroyo allegedly offered jailed former Moro National Liberation Front chair Nur Misuari his freedom in exchange for the influential Muslim leader's support in the May elections," naming Ms Macapagal's "political strategist" Norberto Gonzales as the source of the information, and Nashreen Pangadapun, a member of Maradeka, as source of the news.

Gonzales had reportedly relayed this information in an assembly of some 1,000 MNLF members on Feb. 21 in Marawi City, but the said news item also quoted the prompt denial of the story by Mike Defensor, the President's campaign spokesperson.

Nonetheless according to Pangadapun, "prior to the signing of the deal on Feb. 10," De Venecia and Gonzales visited Misuari at Fort Sto. Domingo where he is being detained.

Finally, toward the end of the story, we also learn that as if in confirmation of what Gonzales told the crowd, Misuari himself addressed the gathering via phone patch, and as Pangadapun told it, Misuari's tone was "just to allow him to pursue what had been agreed upon in the political deal he made with the government."

A very bothersome story raising many, many questions.

Not too long ago, shortly before the last ARMM elections, in "On-line," a TV talk show on ANC hosted by Gene Orejana, Misuari had lambasted Gonzales for meddling too much, as a consequence of which he, Misuari, got the short end of the deal in the 1992 GRP-MNLF peace agreement.

After resigning as presidential adviser on peace concerns, purportedly to focus on the political involvement of his own party in the electoral campaign, Gonzales was recalled by the President and appointed to the post vacated by Roilo Golez, a curious development which reportedly was to "appease" Gonzales.

And Gonzales' first act in his new position was to visit Misuari with De Venecia, an act which obviously was not prompted by Christian charity, much less the goodness of their hearts. Where were they when Misuari needed them most, those first few days after he was retrieved under heavy guard from a jail in Malaysia because then Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad wanted to get rid of him the soonest?

It will be recalled that Malaysian authorities arrested Misuari when he fled to Sabah shortly before or after his followers "went on a murderous rampage" on Nov. 19, 2001, attacking the military headquarters and police detachments, leaving over a hundred people dead, prompting Mahathir to wonder aloud, for the benefit of the press: "Why does he come here every time he makes trouble there?"

Well, why not? Malaysia was the first country that gave refuge and aid in terms of training and logistics to the then fledgling group of young Moro rebels that was to form the Moro National Liberation Front. So what soured the relationship?

Shortly after Misuari was shipped back to the country, wave upon wave of hapless *halaw* (deportees), Filipinos declared by Malaysia as illegal entrants, were themselves shipped back after suffering untold miseries at the hands of Malaysian police in so-called detention centers.

Was this coincidental, merely the unfortunate confluence of disparate developments? Or was it the natural consequence, the most recent link in the chain that began with the raison d'être of the MNLF in the first place?

But then its history, stripped of all the myth and romanticism, is still being written; the ballad of thousands upon thousands who suffered and were killed in its wake has yet to be composed.

For now, we can only ask the question: to what lengths will the Macapagal administration go to win this election?

Yes, we point to the President as the author of The Visit, just as she is being blamed for everything, from the appointment of Comelec Chairman Benjamin Abalos and National Archives director-on-leave Ricardo Manapat, to the deviousness that attends this electoral campaign, and just as she is being suspected of everything, from asking Manapat to manufacture the documents that will disqualify Fernando Poe Jr. from running, to stealing from channeling funds from government coffers to sundry needs of her campaign.

All these she has the power to do because, as her spokespersons have frequently pointed out, this is the first time that we have a "sitting President" as candidate.

The Constitution is silent on measures to rectify this irregularity. Should we be?

* * *

Comments to nm19@my.smart.com.ph

Exchange of ideas

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

SHOULD the leading presidential contenders hold a debate? I think not. The idea of putting all the presidential candidates in a room, and having them debate each other is an idea borrowed from the Americans, and even in the United States, the practice is a fairly new one, dating to the 1960s. In the first place, the American style of presidential debate is more of a panel discussion than a real debate: a proper and enlightening, debate requires one side to adhere to a positive proposition, and the other side to concentrate on demolishing that proposition. Any other format is a glorified interview.

If, for example, a debate between President Macapagal-Arroyo and KNP candidate Fernando Poe Jr. on the question of "the Philippines requires a Strong Republic," then I would be all for it. Such a debate would have a positive proposition—the administration's plan of governance based on a concrete plan—which would require Poe to argue that the idea of a Strong Republic is flawed, or irrelevant, or its objectives better served by his own plan, say, a plan for a "New Morning for the Republic" (much as it might sound like the need for a "New Society"). A debate of this nature would have as its starting point a common frame of reference, which is necessary if the public is to be enlightened as to the real differences between the candidates.

But considering that such a debate is unlikely to be held, it seems to me a waste of time for the candidates—and the electorate—to be subjected to a panel discussion disguised as a debate. What should be held, instead, are a series of presentations, or speeches, before a body representative of the electorate, in which the candidates could individually expound on their platforms. This is more in keeping with our political traditions and practices.

My favorite example dates back to the elections of 1953, when former Defense Secretary Ramon Magsaysay ran against President Elpidio Quirino. The candidates were invited to address the students of the University of the East. In my upcoming sequel to "Twenty Speeches that Moved a Nation," I am including Magsaysay's and Quirino's speeches because they clearly show the differences between the two candidates. Even though they didn't engage in a face-to-face debate, the candidates' speeches were anchored on Quirino presenting his vision of government, and Magsaysay presenting one that responded to what he felt were the weaknesses of his opponent. Anyone who wants to understand either Quirino or Magsaysay need only read the speeches.

President Quirino presented a valedictory for his generation, a passionate defense of the efforts to gain independence peacefully from the Americans, and a condemnation of those he criticized for being collaborators with Japan during the war and who were suddenly pushing the openly pro-American Magsaysay to run for office (he meant Claro M. Recto and Jose P. Laurel), making them opportunists. Quirino proclaimed his administration as genuinely nationalistic, unafraid to challenge America, and concerned with achieving industrial development in the country.

Magsaysay, in addressing the students some time after Quirino did, spoke to the students in a more informal style, often deviating from his prepared speech to ad lib jokes and make sarcastic comments about the incumbent. While Quirino's speech was dignified and appealed to the sacrifices of the past, Magsaysay appealed to the students to secure their future. He argued that the nationalism of Quirino was based on fear, that the present required a new type of leadership that could address the biggest concern of his countrymen, which was to put an end to the Huk rebellion, and restore faith in a government perceived as corrupt and inefficient.

What is particularly interesting is that Magsaysay was unafraid to address students, didn't fear presenting a platform, and most of all, presented it himself. In presentations and debates, the one who doesn't show up loses by default. The audience, after all, knows the different strengths and weaknesses of the debaters or presenters; each participant should be able to tailor his or her presentation based on their own strengths and the opponents' weaknesses. But the candidate who doesn't even show up on the field loses the chance to stand up and be counted.

When Poe suggested that a presidential debate should be held in a slum, he was on to something. I have said before that politics is about communication, and one reader recently told me that this explains why show-biz personalities are so successful in politics. The careers of show-biz personalities are completely at the mercy of the masses, and the success or failure of an actor is totally dependent on the actor's ability to understand, and communicate with, his audience. Professional politicians remain insulated from this need; it handicaps them in campaigning against actors, and it prevents them from developing a genuine rapport with their constituents. The challenge for anyone who wants to be president, then, is: can you communicate with the poorest and least educated of your constituents, in a manner that enables them to understand both your plan of government and you, as a leader?

Let the candidates then go and make their presentations to the poor in the slums, the way they all (well, almost all) trooped to Focap to present their platforms of government. Then let them troop to a forum hosted by the PPCRV, but this time, don't accept proxies.

* * *

Comments welcome at www.quezon.ph

Screen name

READERS' ADVOCATE

Raul J. Palabrica

WHAT's in a name? A rose by any other name would smell as sweet. So goes a popular line from England's literary genius, William Shakespeare.

If a candidate in the May 10 elections is asked the same question, expect him or her to unhesitatingly answer: a lot! A candidate's official and unofficial names can spell the difference between victory and defeat before an electorate that puts a premium on name recall.

For reader Maria Theresa Reyes, the INQUIRER's practice of using in its news reports and feature articles the screen name of movie personalities who are eyeing public office is a cause for concern on her part.

She was reacting to a story that came out in the newspaper recently about the possibility of actor and former Videogram Regulatory Board chair Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr. and his estranged friend, former San Juan mayor and now senatorial candidate Jinggoy Estrada, working together in the Senate if both win in the coming polls.

The reader wrote: "When your newspaper mention Ramon Revilla and Ramon 'Bong' Revilla Jr., please also mention that they are really 'Bautista' and that they are using the 'Revilla' surname for screen purposes only. And that they use that name because they've become known to the public under that name.

"People who do not know their true and real name or identity are being misled. Many are under the impression that they are 'Revillas' when, in truth, they are NOT.

"Journalism's mission is to inform the public of the truth and not to mislead them. Hence, the people have the right to know the true or real surnames of these candidates."

Memory

This is not the first time a reader wrote me to question the newspaper's policy on the use, for reporting purposes, of the screen names of movie personalities who are in government or running for public office. The concern is motivated by a desire to avoid the memories of their beloved ancestors from being associated with namesake actors and actresses who do not do "justice" to their names.

In an effort to drum up patronage for their movies, many of filmdom's upstarts choose screen names that have links to historical events or people who have made meaningful contributions to our society. When this strategy fails to bring in the crowds, the aspiring movie stars do all kinds of tricks, often inappropriate, to induce the entertainment media to write or talk about them. The "genuine" holders of the screen names can only groan with dismay about the identification of their surnames with those characters.

Whether or not the complaints raised by members of the so-called *de buenas familias* about the use of their surnames are justified is not for me to pass upon. Suffice it to say that there is no law that prohibits a person from using a name other than his own so long as it is done for legitimate purposes and the procedures provided for by law for such use are complied with.

Incidentally, aside from "Revilla," the other screen names that the media presently use in their reports are those of former President Joseph Estrada and presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. The latter's true name is Ronald Allan Poe. The real Fernando Poe Jr., a younger brother, died several years ago.

Popular names

In my talk with the editorial staff about the use of the screen name of movie personalities who are in government, I learned that these names are used to enable the readers to immediately understand the news report about those public figures. Since the public knows them by those names, the reading process becomes easier when they are used instead of their real names.

How many readers know that Sen. Ramon Revilla's true name is Jose Bautista? In all the years that he has served in the Senate, he has been addressed by his screen name and not by his original name. The readers may ask "who's he?" if "Bautista," not Revilla, is used to identify the senator from Cavite.

Under the same principle, the surname of former President Joseph Estrada is reported as "Estrada" in spite of the fact that his real family name is "Ejercito." That also explains why his legitimate wife, Sen. Luisa Estrada, and son, Jinggoy Estrada, are identified as "Estradas" too.

The bottom line is: so long as no fraud or misrepresentation is foisted on the readers in the use of a screen name or a name by which a person has been known to the public, the newspaper sees nothing wrong with maintaining its present practice on the screen names of government officials.

As to the suggestion by a reader that the true name be placed in parenthesis beside the screen name, I do not think that would contribute anything substantial to the story. It's the same banana. The name by which a public official is popularly known will always stick in the mind of the reader.

Political color

My article last week ("Campaign coverage") on the newspaper's alleged bias for President Macapagal-Arroyo drew a sharp retort from a reader who wrote: "No matter how you deny and defend your newspaper's treatment of GMA, people have long believed (not perceived) that your paper is truly pro-GMA from Day One. Your paper was active in Erap's ouster and you continue to represent GMA in the media."

His comments reminded me of a retired nurse who took issue with a November 2003 issue of the newspaper that gave front-page treatment to the activities of former Education Secretary Raul Roco. She said "this only confirmed what she has suspected all along that the INQUIRER is supporting Roco and is not, as it claims to be, a neutral reporter of the political events in the country."

Earlier, in September last year, a lay leader complained about the premium treatment the newspaper gave to Sen. Panfilo Lacson's exposé on the "Jose Pidal" account. He said the newspaper "is obviously a supporter of Ping Lacson and will not hesitate to violate the ethics of journalism to support his quest for the presidency."

Last week, when the citizenship of Poe was front-page news for several days, a school teacher wrote me to criticize "the INQUIRER's subtle but undeniable effort to boost the candidacy of the movie actor turned politician."

Amid these conflicting impressions about its political color, will the real INQUIRER please stand up?

* * *

The readers' advocate may be reached at the following address: "The Readers' Advocate" c/o Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City. Or through fax nos. 897-4793 to 94, or readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

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Will FPJ still keep faith with 'masa' interests?

I DO not know if Fernando Poe Jr. is aware of it, but his announced economic brain trust, led by Dr. Raul Fabella of the UP School of Economics and Dr. Bernardo Villegas of the Asia-Pacific University, signals a sea change in his relationship with the Filipino masses.

Until the announcement was made, FPJ was universally seen as the only presidential candidate unbeholden to Washington and its multilateral agents as well as to the Filipino elite. In fact, he was generally perceived as a man of the masses, the idol of the movie-going public, the icon of the populous C, D and E sections of the population—the very people whose poverty has been institutionalized by free trade from 1909 to the present.

Fabella and Villegas and the institutions they represent have been and still are at the forefront of globalization (globalized free trade), which has destroyed and is destroying millions of enterprises and jobs in this country, especially in manufacturing and agriculture. The Caltex Refinery in Batangas, Novelty Philippines and the sugar industry are the latest victims. In anointing Fabella and Villegas as his economic advisers, FPJ has turned his back on the Filipino masses.

Earlier, Vice President Teofisto Guingona and Sen. Serge Osmeña were mentioned for FPJ's economic think tank. At least Guingona is for fair trade and for the nationalist provisions of the Constitution while Osmeña is a pro-Filipino pragmatist in the economy. With Guingona and Osmeña in FPJ's think tank, the Filipino masses would have a fighting chance.

In a radio interview about his program of government two weeks ago, FPJ said he would give top priority "to education, agriculture, restoring peace and order and stamping out corruption." There is no mention of industry or industrialization at all. Which means that, thanks to the influence of Villegas and Fabella, FPJ has abandoned his primordial concern for "breakfast, lunch and dinner" for the masses. In other words, industrialization is not an issue in the current election campaign.

This development, in turn, makes May 10, 2004 a 100 percent contest for the election of the next WB-IMF-WTO overseer in the Philippines, who will govern our country for the benefit of transnational corporations, not of the entire Filipino people.

—AMADO GAT INCIONG,
Unit 301 Union Square Condominium,
145 15th Avenue, Cubao, Quezon City

John Hancock-Manulife merger

I REFER to the article, "Insurance industry consolidation seen" (PDI, 2/05/04) which I found well written and insightful. However, I would like to draw attention to a couple of inaccuracies in the article, one of which refers specifically to John Hancock Life Insurance Corp. in the Philippines.

The second paragraph in the section headed "Consolidation," states: "One of the early birds, Manulife was able to acquire the businesses of four new entrants: Metropolitan Life and John Hancock of the US; CMG of Australia and Zurich Life of Switzerland."

The current and correct position regarding John Hancock and Manulife is that the boards of the two ultimate parent companies have recommended a merger of businesses worldwide and the mechanism by which the transaction is to be completed is by acquisition of John Hancock by Manulife. John Hancock stockholders voted in February on the proposed acquisition. Regulatory approval will be sought following the approval of the acquisition by 50 percent of John Hancock stockholders.

So, it is incorrect to state that Manulife was able to acquire the business of John Hancock.

May I add that John Hancock has been in the Philippines since 1997 and has remained committed to the Philippines. It has no intention to leave the country and, should its stockholders not approve the proposed acquisition, it will continue to grow its presence in the Philippines, based on a sound business plan and a realistic assessment of the market.

I do agree with Vicente Ayllón's view that many new entrants in the market overestimated their capability and that some business plans were unrealistic, not reflecting a true understanding of how challenging and competitive the market in the Philippines is. However, it must also be stated that some foreign insurers have withdrawn from the market not because of their inability to compete or achieve success in the Philippines, but because of events outside the Philippines. Industry consolidation and rationalization are global phenomena, one consequence of which can be local consolidation or market withdrawal.

—JOHN D. CASEY,
president and chief executive officer,
John Hancock Life Insurance Corp.,
16/F PS Bank Center Bldg.,
777 Paseo de Roxas, Makati City

Is FPJ being inflicted on the country?

YOUR columnist, Isagani Cruz, says (Separate Opinion, 2/22/04) that he wonders "why such supposedly responsible leaders as (Senators Edgardo Angara and) Aquilino Pimentel could be so irresponsible as to inflict Poe on the nation as the next president of the Philippines."

Would that Justice Cruz see for himself the reaction of people nationwide to the electric presence of Fernando Poe Jr., at the hustings. Then he would probably be less rash in asserting that anybody and certainly not I had "inflicted" FPJ at all on the nation.

For believe it or not, people all over the nation warmly welcome him rightly or wrongly as their "liberator" from oppression, corruption and poverty. I am thus inclined to think that it is I who is being inflicted as a reelectionist senator by FPJ on the nation and not the other way around.

Whether you find this observation valid or not, I do think there is no stopping FPJ from vanquishing electorally all those who stand in his way to Malacañang.

As usual, we have nothing but respect for Justice Cruz's "separate opinion" but it is obvious that under the circumstances it would not make a dent on the emerging electoral majority opinion that the people will render in favor of FPJ as their choice for president in the May elections.

—SEN. AQUILINO Q. PIMENTEL JR.,
6/F Senate of the Philippines,
GSIS Building,
Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City

Measures to curb shortages of basic items

TRADE and Industry Secretary Cesar Purisima made the right move to strengthen coordination between the DTI and the Department of Agriculture in addressing the concerns on the supply and price of basic commodities. While the proposal of Raul Concepcion to make the two departments co-chair of the Price Stabilization Council is worth considering, adopting it will take an amendment of the Price Stabilization Act.

The DTI and DA have been at loggerheads on the issue of whether to import corn, rice, chicken, etc. for some time now due to the different publics they serve.

But in the meantime, there are several measures that can immediately be implemented by the government to ensure that the chicken shortage last Christmas will not be repeated.

1. Regular and thorough monitoring of the production and supply of the raw materials, that is, they should check and countercheck government reports and forecasts as they tend to be unreliable and inadequate. There is no substitute for actual and field inspection by key officials of the concerned agencies.

2. Improve commodity flow by minimizing the add-on cost due to the perennial "peso checkpoints." The infrastructure requirements are another point but these would require a more herculean intervention. (For example, my friend sells his *talong* produce in Batangas at a farm gate price of P10 per kilo. But its retail price in Manila is about P30 to P40 per kilo. The traders are pointing to the high cost of transporting the produce.)

3. At retail level, the DTI must review the shelf price tagging system that replaced the individual item price tagging. Oftentimes, many price tags at the shelves even of high-end supermarkets and malls cannot be found. Those that can be found are either not updated or have been placed somewhere else. On the other hand, the price reading equipment are not functioning or cannot be located.

4. The government should review the basket of commodities that comprise the so-called "basic or prime commodities." The Filipino penchant for ICT (computer, cellphones) items is gobbling their income and their expenditure pattern is much different now.

—FEDERICO G. LUCHICO JR.
1700 Bishop, Brooksidehills,
Cainta, Rizal

Super slow telegraphic transfer

WHO could have collected or received the money I sent to my son, Albert, in Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro through the telegraphic transfer service of the Bureau of Telecommunications in Consolacion, Cebu last Nov. 24, 2003?

From Nov. 24, 2003—to this writing, Jan. 27, 2004, two months and three days have already gone by but my son hasn't written me yet to acknowledge receipt of the first P1,000 I sent him via telegraphic transfer.

My son asked me to send him money in his new location—Sablayan Prison and Penal Farm (SPPF), Mindoro Occidental where he was transferred—from the New Bilibid Prisons (NBP) in Muntinlupa City. He was transferred to the SPPF where he was to be paroled in a few years.

In the SPPF, he told me in a letter dated June 26, 2003, that he would have to buy some "kitchen utensils and other personal needs."

Albert, however, completely stopped communicating after his third letter to me on Sept. 3, 2003 or as soon as I started sending him money and the things he asked me to send him.

When my son was still in the NBP, he never failed to acknowledge receipt of any portion of the P130,200 I sent him in 102 instances over a period of seven years, 10 months and 22 days.

And he also confirmed receipt of a total of 12 packages we sent him at the NBP every time these were delivered to him.

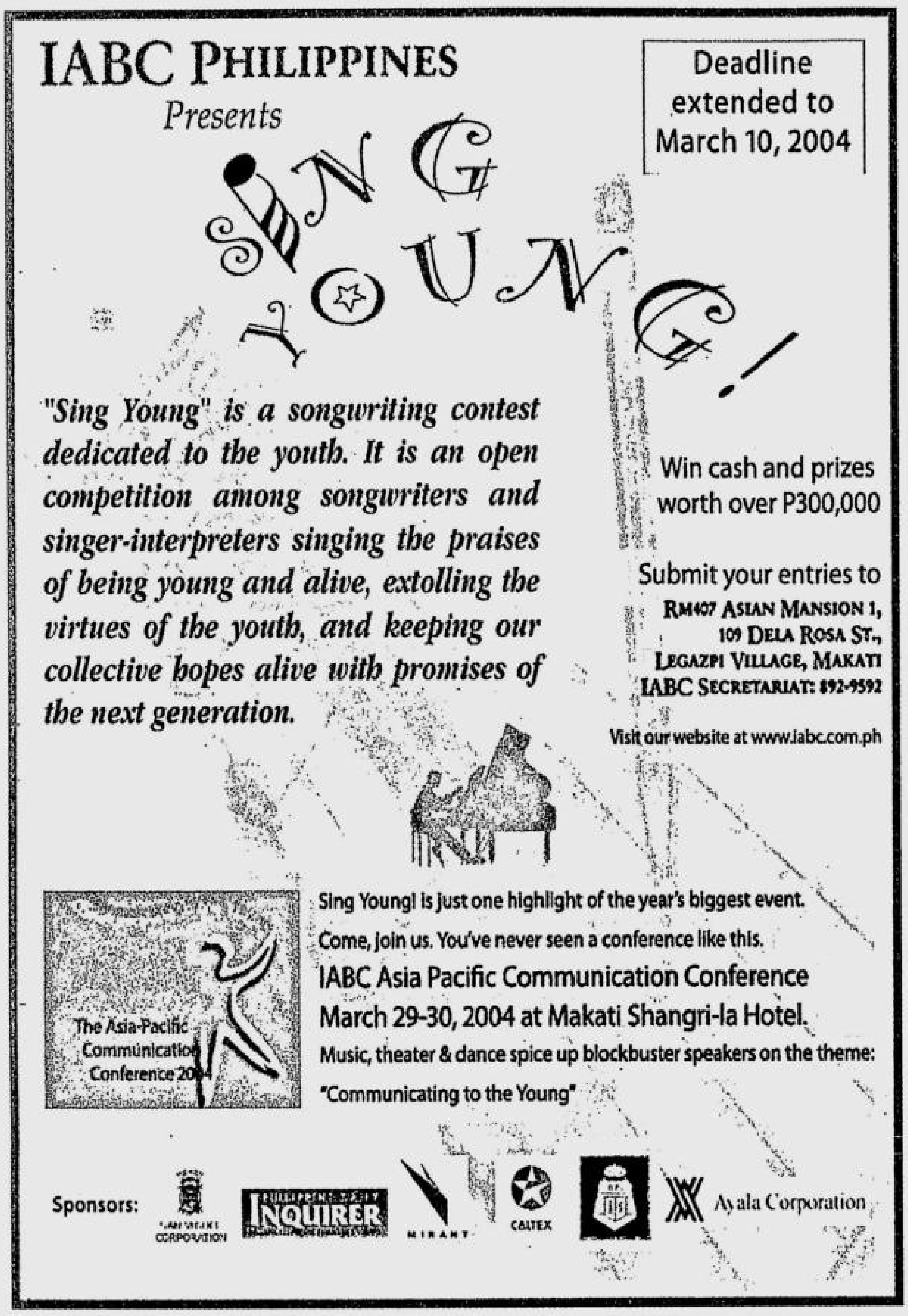
Last Jan. 28, 2004—or after 4 months and 25 days of silence—I received my son's letter dated Dec. 18, 2003 confirming his receipt of two postal money orders worth P1,000 each and the package containing the 10 items of clothing I sent him, also through the Philippine Postal Corp. But he told me in the same letter that "until now I've not received any telegraphic transfer money you mentioned you sent last Nov. 24, 2003."

Is there a mystery in the SPPF?

The time that has passed certainly raises doubts, if not outright suspicion.

I hope the concerned government agency, specifically the National Telegraphic Transfer Division of the Telecommunications Office on A. Roces Avenue, Quezon City, unravels this puzzler.

—ALBERTO A. ABRIOL,
108 V&G BII Subd., Nangka,
Consolacion, Cebu



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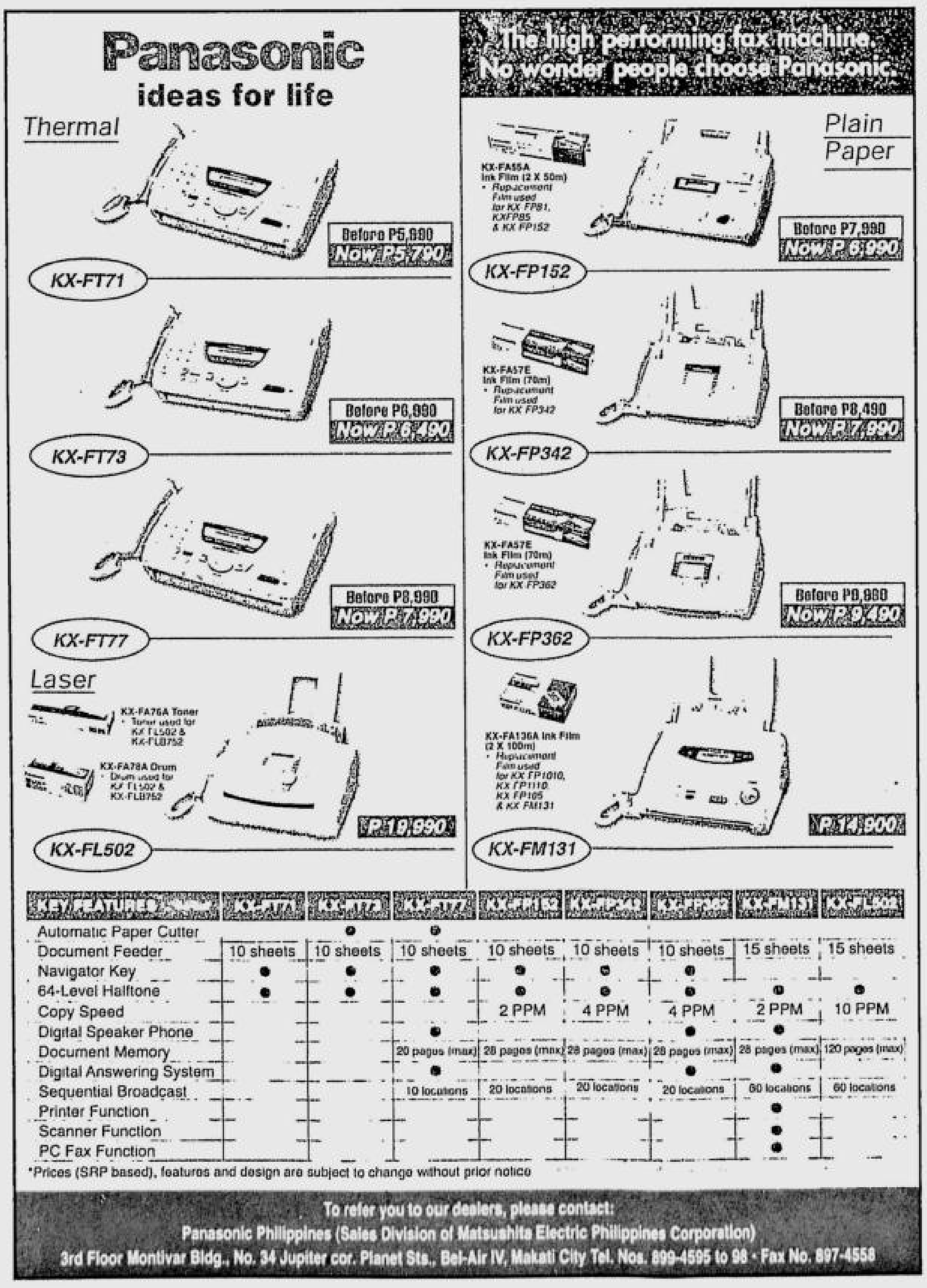

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Left insists military behind killings

LUCENA CITY—Leftist groups dismissed Malacañang's declaration that the Mindoro double murders had already been solved and accused President Macapagal-Arroyo of orchestrating a whitewash to absolve the military.

"GMA cannot fool Mindoro folks," Robert de Castro, Bayan Muna deputy secretary general, said over the phone as he dared government investigators to present the mastermind behind the killings of Naujan Vice Mayor Juvy Magsino and her companion Leima Fortu on Feb 13.

"It seems that GMA is now engrossed again in absolving her favorite military the fastest way she,can by declaring that the case is now closed. We cannot discount that a grand scheme to whitewash the case is now rolling," Irein Cuasay, Karapatan-Southern Tagalog spokesperson, said in a phone interview.

"Macapagal-Arroyo wants a hastily investigation to be able to pursue her motive—whitewash the case and let her butchers be at large. Just like what they did in the double murders of human rights activists Eden Marcellana and Eddie Gumanoy," Cuasay said.

The Department of Justice has investigated the Marcellana and Gumanoy's double murders but no resolution has yet been made.

On Saturday, Ms Macapagal announced that police have identified a prime suspect in the killing.

The President disclosed that based on the investigation, the murders were "purely a criminal act without any ideological undertones in which the police or military are implicated directly or circumstantially."

STOP THE KILLINGS
PAL
MILITANT groups call for a stop to killings in Mindoro after the murder of teacher Leima Fortu and lawyer Juvy Magsino. JOAN BONDOC

But Malacañang withheld the identities of the suspects reportedly so as not to jeopardize the police operation. Police said they had already filed a criminal case against the triggermen on Friday before the prosecutor's office in Calapan City.

Cuasay said Magsino's family has also filed a murder charge on Thursday, a day earlier than the police, against two suspects and several John Does, whom she said are the true killers.

She begged not to identity the suspects, upon lawyers' advice.

When asked of the possibility that their group and the police have the same suspects, Cuasay said it is far-fetched.

"They intend to whitewash the case, to obfuscate the truth. We aim to ferret out the truth and bring the real killers before the bar of justice," she said.

She hinted that their suspect is a member of the paramilitary group that operates not only in Mindoro but also in the whole of Southern Tagalog.

"They can be dispatched anywhere in the region to inflict harm and even death upon the military's order," she said.

Cuasay said they expect the release of the warrant of arrest against the suspects early next week.

De Castro said the real killers are freely roaming in and out of the 204th Infantry Brigade camp in Naujan. "It's not simply a criminal act. By eliminating a progressive official and future militant mayor of Naujan like Juvy, it becomes political in nature."

"As long as the perpetrators remain free, heinous killing spree in Mindoro will never end. The military in the island are the murderers. Any investigation without including the 204th Infantry Brigade is a circus. We demand no less than the punishment of the 204th soldiers," De Castro said. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Army exec denies abduction of Bayan Muna members

TACLOBAN CITY—Maj. Gen. Glenn Rabonza, commanding general of the Army's 8th Infantry Division based in Samar, described as "baseless, unfounded and ridiculous" the allegations that the military was behind the abduction of two Bayan Muna members on Feb. 21 in Baybay, Leyte.

The military "will not resort to any unlawful acts as it will not, in any way, tarnish its image as protector of the people and the State," Rabonza said in a statement yesterday.

Rabonza stressed the military "respects" Bayan Muna as a political organization, alluding to an earlier statement made by Melissa Portaleza, wife of Rolando, one of the two abducted by seven armed men in Agta Beach in Barangay Kilim Baybay last Feb. 21 around 10 a.m.

Melissa had said she was certain that it was members of the military that abducted her husband and his companion, Jacklyn Paguntalan. She said the military had been watching closely the members of Bayan Muna on suspicion that the group is a front of the communist movement.

Melissa has joined the search conducted by human rights groups in the region like Katungod, Concerned Citizens for Justice and Peace and Bayan Muna.

The group went as far as Sogod, Southern Leyte, where the 43rd Infantry Battalion is based, to vainly search for the two Bayan Muna members.

Like Melissa, militant groups in Eastern Visayas believed the military was behind the abduction, as the abductors were described as "Tagalog speaking and (have) military built."

But Rabonza said those were not bases for them to blame the military. "Tagalog or Filipino is our national language and that majority of the 8th ID personnel are Waray and Cebuano," he said. *Joey A. Gabieta, PDI Visayas Bureau*

NCIP term lapse worries indigenous peoples

BAGUIO CITY—The term of the commissioners whom President Macapagal-Arroyo had appointed to the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) had lapsed on Feb. 20, leaving indigenous peoples here worried about the fate of their ancestral land concerns.

A major issue is the status of ancestral lands found within government reservations, which NCIP chair Reuben Lingating had decided to title.

Members of Aspulan, a group of Ibaloi elders, wanted Malacañang to clarify whether it would pursue Lingating's decision to recognize native titles located inside government reserves.

Joseph Jude Carantes, an Aspulan leader, said the NCIP decision is radical because it resolves most of the pending ancestral land claims in the country.

Lingating earlier told Baguio's Ibaloi elders that the decision allowed them to release certificates of ancestral land titles (CALTs) to land claims located inside forestlands, protected wildlife and mineral areas, economic zones and military reservations.

He said the decision courts reprisals from within the government, as well as from big business, whose interests are affected by the Indigenous People's Rights Act.

But Leilene Gallardo, NCIP Cordillera director, confirmed that the NCIP failed to draw up the guidelines on the issuance of titles in government reservations before the Feb. 20 termination of its commissioners.

"The guidelines are important because it would not matter who will take over. The guidelines will force anyone to comply with the new decision that reservations can be titled to indigenous Filipinos," Carantes said. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Subanen group to support pro-tribal candidates

OZAMIZ CITY—Wanted: national and local candidates who have pro-*lumad* platform of government.

Unrico Simbulan, chair of Salabukan Nok G'taw Subanen (SGS), said the tribe will be throwing support behind candidates in the national, provincial, and municipal contests whose governance programs are supportive of and put importance on the interests of indigenous peoples.

Should a politician's candidacy merit the SGS endorsement, the organization will campaign for the candidate among the Subanen voters in Western Mindanao for national posts.

They will also campaign in areas where they have local organs for town and provincial candidates.

But Simbulan disclosed that SGS has not yet come up with the slate of candidates because no politician has so far come out with a clearheaded pro-Subanen agenda of governance among their electoral platform.

The screening process though, he added, is underway in the local chapters of SGS, as he also announced that the organization through its local organs is open to discussion with politicians that have pro-*lumad* programs of governance.

During previous elections, the Subanens were deluded into thinking the aid offered by politicians "in the form of food, clothing and even classy wines to the tribe's leaders" signified their commitment to the indigenous peoples' cause, Simbulan said.

"All these turned out to be farce after all," he lamented.

"Now, we are still faced with the question of how to institute long term and sustainable development measures for the Subanen tribe."

In a position paper, SGS identified the threats currently posed on the Subanen as landgrabbing, dislocation due to government and private development projects, and the government's continued neglect of their right to self-determination.

Specifically, these threats include the entry of large-scale mining activities, plantations cultivating commercial tree species, and the declaration of large portions of the tribe's ancestral lands into protected areas that eventually bar them of its use.

SGS said the government's counter-insurgency drive is displacing tribal families from their villages and have resulted to several human rights violation cases.

The Subanen also suffer from the system in which their copra, corn and vegetables are subjected to low buying prices, but high costs of fertilizers and usurious rates charged on production loans, SGS noted. *Ryan Rosauro, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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GMA blows top over slow work on ADB road project

PAGADIAN CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo on Friday blew her top over the slow-paced construction of the Asian Development Bank-funded Pagadian-Zamboanga road project.

The P500-million Pagadian-Zamboanga road project that ends in Zamboanga City was started during the term of President Fidel Ramos in 1992.

Its first contractor was the company owned by the husband of Sen. Tessie Aquino-Oreta.

The provincial government of Zamboanga del Sur under then Gov. Isidoro Real Jr. requested the Department of Public Works and Highways to rescind the contract because of huge slippage.

The request was granted and the project was later awarded to a consortium of local contractors.

Ms Macapagal said she was surprised that construction has yet to begin, prompting her to describe the project as "the longest road."

Sources said the project suffered delays because of squabbles between local politicians in Zamboanga City and Zamboanga del Sur.

Speaking before reporters here, Ms Macapagal warned the contractors of the 200-km project that she would cancel the contract if they would not finish it on schedule.

She threatened to give the project to the military engineering brigade should the contractors fail to correct the slippage.

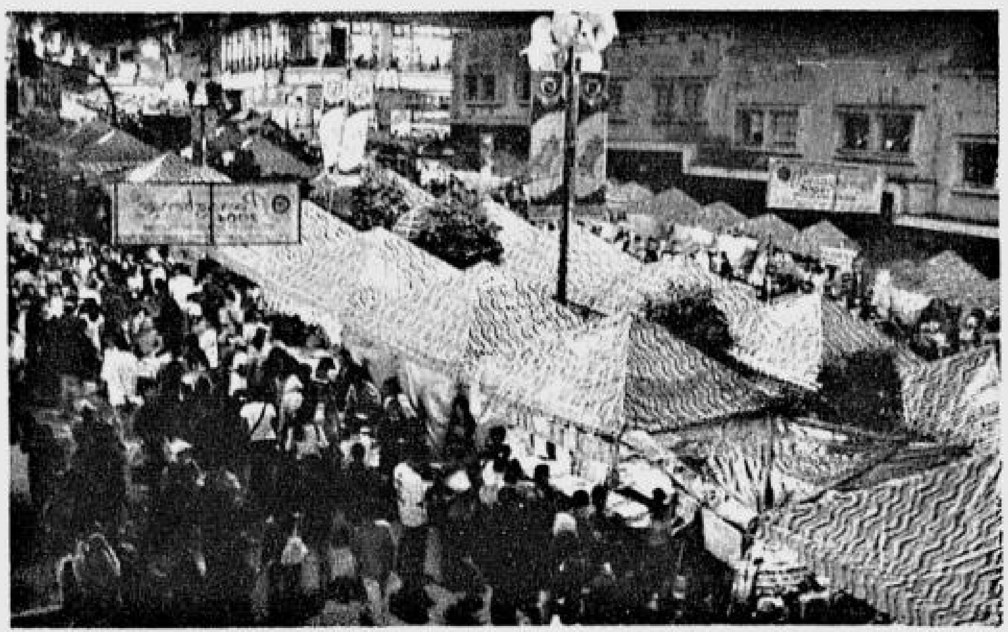
Earlier, some contractors complained of delays in the releases of funds channeled by the ADB to the Philippine government.

They also complained of extortions from communist, Abu Sayyaf and Moro rebels.

On several occasions, communist rebels burned dozens of earth-moving equipment because of the contractors' failure to pay protection fees.

The DPWH regional office also reasoned out that intermittent rains, which triggered floods and landslides, also contributed to the delay of the road project.

But Ms Macapagal was unconvinced. *Hernan de la Cruz, PDI Mindanao Bureau*



TOOTS SOBERANO/ PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

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Lucena students clean up FPJ campaign litter

LUCENA CITY—The day after the tumultuous welcome for opposition presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. by thousands of his adoring fans during the Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino (KNP) grand campaign rally at the Alcala Sports Complex on Friday evening here, hordes of broom-wielding high school students were seen cleaning the place of piles of debris that the political affair left behind.

"There ought to be a law that would require politicians to clean up the place after every campaign rally. We're now a mass of young janitors and janitresses here in charge of picking up all the garbage they left behind," a senior high school student of the Quezon National High School (QNHS) told the INQUIRER.

Not one of the students gave his name for fear of being castigated by their commandant who ordered them to sweep the sports grounds of debris.

"Maybe, he's an FPJ fan," said a student who was sweeping in front of the platform now bare of campaign posters.

Hundreds of QNHS Citizens Advancement Training cadets swarmed all over the vast grounds of the sports complex, picking up assorted litter.

But what added to the misery of the youngsters was when the piles of garbage that they collected and just waiting to be put inside jute sacks were blown away when two helicopters landed at the field.

Although seething with complaints, the poor students had no choice but repeat the task.

Five private helicopters landed at the sports complex grounds to fly the KNP ticket to Lopez town then to Legazpi City.

Although Poe showed up at the political rally a little late on Friday evening, he regaled his fans and supporters with his cliche of movie lines such as "*Kakalusin natin ang salop kapag umaapaw na, kaya ko pang magtiis* (We'll level the grains when the cup is full, I can still take it)," to hit the Macapagal administration.

After the rally at around 11:30 p.m., Poe's supporters grabbed campaign posters of the actor.

A man in his 50s grabbed a tarpaulin poster of Poe with his running mate Sen. Loren Legarda.

"I will separate the two and give the FPJ part of the poster to my wife to be displayed in our sala," he said.

Rodrigo Mendoza said he and his wife played extras during the shooting of "Perlas ng Silangan" in the coastal village of Talao-Talao here way back in 1969.

"FPJ was very kind to us. He even shared us his food," he recalled. "But sad to admit, even if he is my idol and I'm still his fan, I will not vote for him. He's not fit for the job. It will ruin him," Mendoza said. *Delfin Mallari Jr., Southern Luzon Bureau*

More poll benefits for public teachers

DAVAO CITY—Public schoolteachers who will serve in the May 10 elections will receive bigger honoraria and additional benefits, Education Secretary Edilberto de Jesus said here on Monday.

De Jesus said the Commission on Elections agreed to grant the teachers' demand for more benefits during a recent meeting with DepEd officials.

Under the agreement, De Jesus said a teacher serving as election officer would received an honorarium of P1,000 per day, or P100 more than in 2001.

De Jesus said the poll body also agreed to set aside a contingency fund for the insurance coverage of the teachers. They would also get legal assistance in case of disputes arising from their service.

Earlier, teachers in Southern Mindanao asked the Comelec to give them more benefits or they would not serve in the elections.

While most of the teachers' demands had been granted, De Jesus said their plea for an optional election service could not be considered because teachers were mandated to help in any political exercise.

"This has been the teachers' mandatory election duties," he said.

He said he was expecting that with the increase in assistance, teachers would perform their duties well to ensure a clean, transparent and orderly conduct of the polls.

He also advised them to avoid being partisan so that they could avoid charges by politicians.
Anthony Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau

102-year-old can still thread needle

From page A1

Dogelio or Nana Bentay as she is known in town. "My mind is still sharp and my hearing has not changed."

Born on May 17, 1901, Nana Bentay is older than her hometown Prieto Diaz, which was proclaimed a town years after her birth. "I've seen our town grow and change. There are more people now," she said.

She had nine children, three of whom have already passed away. She has lost track of the number of grandchildren and great grandchildren she has. She lives with her unmarried daughter Otella, 73.

Nana Bentay used to walk all the time, until she tripped over some coconut midribs and fell. The accident has now made walking impossible.

Other than this, she does not suffer from any other illness. Her mind is sharper than most people younger than her and she can hold her own in conversations.

She describes her family as "close-knit," and observes that today's generation is "ferocious."

Secret

Nana Bentay's secret to long life is drinking boiled *lakad-bulanor* or *sambong* (*Blumea balsamifera*).

"We boil the *lakad-bulan* in water. We have been drinking this since we were children. It's like water to us. It makes our body strong," she said.

The centenarian is content with her life.

"I'm too old to get married again. (Otella) is not married yet; I wish she got married. I want to see my children have good lives. They're still my burden," Nana Bentay said.

FELIZBERTA Dogelio: My mind is still sharp and my hearing has not changed. PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

She speaks fondly of her grandchildren—her source of joy.

"*Kada saro kaan madalaw. Lain ang nagdadara ki bagas, lain ang nagdadara ki kaldero, lain su nagdadara ki kamote. Di maogmahon man ako* (Each one of them visits me. One would bring rice, another would bring a pot and still another would bring root crops. They make me happy)," she narrated with a smile.

Her treasured possessions are a pair of abaca slippers and earrings that she always wears, an alarm clock that hangs just above a comfortable chair where she spends most of her time now, and a bird drawing that she loves to look at.

"I'm happy looking at plants and flowers. I sleep even during daytime; it feels good ... I still eat a lot," she said.

Jeepney drivers mount strike

From page A1

crease and a rollback in fuel prices.

Efren de Luna, president of the Philippine Confederation of Drivers and Operators-Alliance of Concerned Transport Organizations (PCDO-Acto), said the "skeleton strike" was expected to paralyze 50 percent of the jeepney transport system nationwide.

The PCDO-Acto, the Pagkakaisa ng mga Samahan ng Tsuper at Opereytor Nationwide (Piston) and the Samahan ng Tsuper at Operator ng Pilipinas (STOP) are planning to launch a general strike on March 8.

The transport workers are asking the Land Transportation and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) for a P1-P2 increase in fares for the first 5 km, and oil companies to reduce their price of diesel to P12.60 per liter.

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday expressed confidence that Transport Secretary Leandro Mendoza would be able to handle the situation well.

"I already talked to Secretary Larry Mendoza and I am confident he can handle the situation. I assure you that Larry Mendoza is a very, very good general," she told journalists in Dipolog City.

In an interview with RMN, the President's spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said Mendoza and officials of the Department of Transportation and Communication had been holding dialogues with transport group leaders to explain the government's alternative measures to ease the plight of operators and drivers without raising transport fares.

These measures include discounts on diesel purchases, tariff perks on imported spare parts, and rice subsidies, Bunye said.

Earlier, Ms Macapagal appealed to the transport groups to be "prudent and reasonable" in their demands, noting that world crude oil prices should soften with the end of the winter season—when fuel demand is at its peak.

Organizers said they expected to paralyze transportation in Laguna, Batangas, Cavite, Quezon, Tarlac, Pangasinan, Nueva Ecija, Bulacan, Pampanga, Bataan, Zambales, and provinces in the Cordillera and Mindanao, including the entire Cebu island and several routes in Baguio City.

In Metro Manila, Piston leaders said the strike would affect the Cubao-Divisoria, Cubao-España, Marikina, Alabang, Manila, Novaliches and other routes in the whole of Camanava (Caloocan, Malabon, Navotas, Valenzuela).

De Luna said the strike would affect jeepney routes in Pasig, Quiapo, San Juan, Marikina, Quezon City, Manila, Sucat and Alabang.

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) will be coordinating with the LTFRB and the Land Transportation Office in fielding emergency vehicles for stranded commuters.

MMDA General Manager Robert Nacianceno said the agency would deploy 20 mobile cars and two prison vans to help commuters. But he clarified that the the number-coding scheme would not be suspended.

Director Ricardo de Leon of the National Capital Region Police Office yesterday said trucks would be fielded to ferry commuters, while policemen would be assigned to the streets to protect commuters and non-striking drivers, De Leon said.

Central Luzon

Members of eight transport federations in Central Luzon are joining the strike to call for the scrapping of the oil deregulation law and to ask the government to grant their appeal for a P1.50 fare increase.

The STOP said the various schemes that Malacañang undertook to cushion the effect of the monthly oil price increases were just "tokens" as the real root of the transport sector's woes was the oil deregulation law.

"That is why our main call is to scrap the oil deregulation law as we believe it is a burden to all," said Tom Talavera, STOP spokesperson.

He said his group believed that its call for a P1.50 fare increase would not solve the drivers' problem of low earnings and would just be another burden to the people. "That is why we appeal to the people to unite with us in demanding the government to scrap the oil deregulation law which (causes) prices of goods and services to skyrocket," he said.

Dr. Ricardo Sibug, assistant regional director of the Department of Education, said DepEd officials had given school superintendents the discretion to suspend classes in areas affected by the strike today.

Cebu, Negros

Transport groups in Metro Cebu, Bacolod City and Negros Occidental yesterday announced that they would be joining the strike to demand a P1.50 increase in fare.

The Nagkahiusang Drayber sa Sugbo (Nadsu), which has a membership of at least 5,000 drivers and operators in 36 routes in Metro Cebu, will lead the protest, according to the group's chair, Anthony Pogado.

The Visayas United Drivers and Transport Cooperative (Vudtrasco) and the Cebu Transport Services Cooperative (Citrasco), which count for some 2,000 members who include taxi drivers, are also joining the strike.

In Negros Occidental, the United Negros Drivers Operators Center (Undoc) is also demanding a stop in oil price increases, a suspension of the oil deregulation law, and the scrapping of all "oppressive and onerous" taxes imposed on the transport sector.

General Santos

In General Santos City, tricycle drivers are joining the protest.

Roy Besande, chair of the 500-strong tricycle drivers group, said they would mount a rally at 8 a.m. in front of the Caltex and Petron depots in Barangay Bula and march on Garcia Memorial Park at the downtown area to press their demand for a P1 fare increase.

Last week, the city council approved the petition of tricycle drivers led by the Transport Integrated Restructuring and Economic Services for a P1 fare increase.

In Davao City, transport workers affiliated with the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan will hold a two-hour picket on San Pedro Street. *With reports from Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Margaux Ortiz, Norman Bordadora; Tonette Orejas and Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk; Jhunnex Napallacan and Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau; and Aquiles Z. Zonio, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Class war theme has new variant

From page A1

cent compared to Ms Macapagal's 29 percent in the D class. In the poorer E class, the gap was even wider—44 percent for Poe and 27 percent for the President. Ms Macapagal showed strength in the ABC class (middle to upper classes), where she polled 30 percent, compared with Poe's 23 percent. Former Education Secretary Raul Roco, who got 24 percent, split the ABC vote with the President.

According to statistical surveys, there are far more poor voters (at least 60 percent of voters come from the poor and *masa* classes) than voters from the middle and upper classes.

Pulse Asia's January-February survey showed Poe leading in the E class (39.3 percent) and in the D class (29.9 percent) compared to Ms Macapagal's 28.7 percent in the E class and 32.9 percent in the D class.

Whatever variations there are between the findings of SWS and Pulse Asia, the class profile they map out is essentially similar. The presumption is that the candidate who has the edge in the more numerous class has an advantage that will be very hard to offset.

In this equation, voting preferences according to region is less important than preferences according to class. This is because the poor are fairly widely distributed across all regions of the country.

Poe and Estrada

This year's election echoes the populist theme of the 1998 election addressed to the *masa*. Joseph Estrada, who presented himself as the man of the masses, capitalized on the theme to mobilize the support of the lower classes. Poe is tapping this same constituency. A comparison of poll surveys in the last few months of the 1998 election to those conducted recently, however, tends to indicate that Poe has not created a groundswell of support from the poor as Estrada had.

Both Poe and Estrada based their campaign on identifying with the *masa*—not on any concrete program or achievement that materially helped the poor but on their cinema roles that cast them as incarnating the aspirations of the poor or defending them from injustices arising from the abuses of the powerful and rich.

When Estrada was in power, he found that it was much easier to proclaim pro-poor slogans and to incite them against the rich than initiate programs that lifted the poor from poverty. Sloganeering spelled the difference between Estrada and the Marxists, who matched their revolutionary rhetoric with social programs designed to redistribute wealth.

Records show that the poverty gap widened during the Estrada administration more than previous administrations that had been criticized as conservative, reactionary and "elitist." And if there was a wealth transfer during the Estrada administration, it was a vast transfer of wealth, engineered by exercise of presidential power, to private wealth accumulation.

And yet, it was during the terms of presidents reviled for their "elitist" backgrounds that poverty alleviation achieved some positive results (e.g. the Ramos administration).

With nothing more to offer than a promise to put food on the table of the poor for breakfast, lunch and supper, Poe is not in a better position than Estrada to translate pro-poor rhetoric to reality because he does not offer any program on how to make good his promise.

Without a program to alleviate poverty, let alone create jobs, Poe is creating big expectations among the poor and setting the stage for a consequent widespread disenchantment that can only make the poor more cynical about regular elections as a means to alleviate poverty. The vote of the poor has been used to provide legitimacy to elected governments.

Importance of debate

The reason I see another betrayal of the poor is the determined dodging by another self-proclaimed "man of the masses" of calls for public debate over the critical issue of having a political and economic program. The poor, more than the middle and upper classes, have a right to know how they are going to fare better under a presidency that is offering them the moon and the stars, without spelling out the pain and the costs.

The opposition has justified this debate-evasion by saying that its candidate will detail his program of government through sleek TV commercials rather than through public debate purportedly because debates are all talk and produce no results.

It is only in a public debate over programs where questions can be asked and answered. TV commercials are a one-way medium through which messages are pounded on the heads of the viewers without giving them a chance to ask questions so they can find out what is phony.

The absence of debate, which is so essential in democratic accountability, puts a blindfold on the eyes of the people who are being asked to vote for the unknown.

The poor, as well as the middle class, can also benefit from public discussion. To say that debate is only for the middle class and the educated is to say that the poor do not deserve to be informed because they are ignorant.

It is important to ask whether there is a relationship between the emergence of populist demagogues and poor education that often is a consequence of poverty. Populist demagogues thrive on voters' ignorance.

It is not too farfetched to say that it is in the interest of demagogues—who detest education—to keep voters ignorant. And one way of doing this is to deny the poor and the ignorant the benefit of public debate as a means of educating the poor about the importance of programs in lifting them from poverty.

The more poor and ignorant people we have, the more our elections become farcical because they can be hijacked by demagogues styling as "man of the masses."

The more informed the voters are, the less likely they are swayed by slogans of demagogues. So long as poverty increases and so long as voters are kept ignorant (as a consequence of poverty and poor education), election outcomes will be hostage to preferences of the poorer classes, whose poverty and ignorance make them easy prey to manipulation by populist demagogues.

This is the implication flowing from the pattern of voter preference that is polarizing along class lines.

New variant

Although the class war theme is less emphasized in this election than in 1998, the theme has a new variant. The new theme is that an ignorant and unschooled person can help the poor better than the much reviled "elite."

Populism is not a new theme in Philippine politics. We have had populist presidents such as Manuel Quezon, Ramon Magsaysay and Diosdado Macapagal. They had programs directed at alleviating poverty and reducing the rich-poor gap.

They also had more than slogans. Quezon had his social justice program. Magsaysay had his land for the landless program, while Macapagal had a substantive agrarian reform program.

While Macapagal was truly born into a dirt-poor peasant family. Estrada and Poe sprang from families of means. They hardly encountered poverty.

The populism of Estrada and Poe is cast in a different template. They tend to believe that slogans alone can give food to the poor.

The current campaign is resonant with rhetoric hostile to an encounter of ideas and to a presentation of programs. It is a campaign that exploits class antagonism without offering relief to the poor, except empty slogans.

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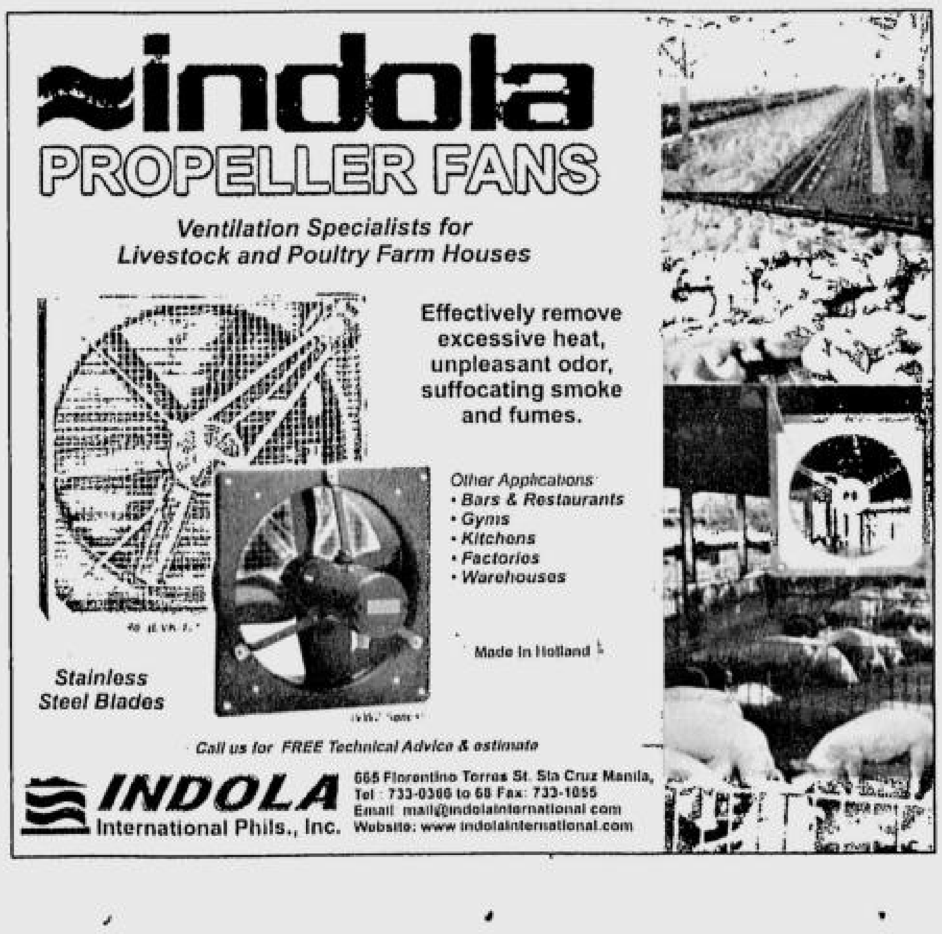

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We bombed ferry, says Abu chief

From page A1

nounced over the Radio Mindanao Network (RMN).

RMN, which had often been called by the Abu Sayyaf in the past, said Soliman claimed a bomb had been planted in the SuperFerry 14 in revenge for incidents of violence in Mindanao and the rape of Muslim women by soldiers.

"This is revenge," RMN program director Benji Alejandro quoted Soliman as saying.

Alejandro said he first got a text message from Soliman at around 8 a.m. on Friday or about seven hours after the ferry had caught fire. The message purportedly contained the admission.

Passenger 51

Asked what his proof was that a suicide bomber was responsible for the explosion, Soliman told the INQUIRER: "Your clue is the person who was Passenger 51 of SuperFerry 14."

"He was the passenger from the Blue Room or Blue Cabin. Whatever it is, he's the man. That was his mission. You find out who he is, then you have the identity," he said.

Gina Virtusio, the shipping company's corporate communications manager, said the company could not give out any information about Passenger 51 because of its confidentiality policy.

The company will give the name only to investigators, according to Virtusio.

Soliman, also the Abu Syyaf intelligence officer, said "the *mujahid* (freedom fighter) was old enough and obviously determined enough to carry out the mission."

Intelligence reports have indicated that some 50 young Moro suicide bombers were trained last year. Authorities had brushed aside the reports.

Boldness

But Senior Supt. Rodolfo "Boogie" Mendoza, an expert in counterterrorism, said "there is already an indication that Filipino Muslim extremists have the boldness to carry out a suicide mission just like in the Davao bombing where investigators are saying that the alleged bomber was among the casualties."

"If that claim is true, then we have a serious problem," the police officer said.

The government has ruled out any immediate threat from the Abu Sayyaf, claiming that the group's forces have been neutralized with the arrest of some of its top leaders, including Ghalib Andang, alias Commander Robot.

Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza said that any group claiming responsibility for the explosion merely wanted to gain media exposure.

"Based on my experience as a policeman, when there are events that catch attention, there are always people who would claim responsibility," said Mendoza, a former Philippine National Police chief.

He dismissed as "far-fetched" speculations that the fire that engulfed SuperFerry 14 had been an act of sabotage.

"According to initial findings, there was no sabotage ... because from experience, ships do catch fire. There are aircons (air-conditioning units), boiler rooms and the kitchen, where fires usually start," Mendoza told reporters at Philippine Coast Guard headquarters.

No official findings from authorities could confirm the Abu Sayyaf's claim. But survivors' accounts were consistent when it came to the explosion.

"The explosion was so loud. It was like a bomb," a survivor interviewed on television said.

Passengers said the explosion was heard at around 12:50 a.m. on Friday, while the ship was near Corregidor Island on its way to Bacolod and Cagayan de Oro.

Timing device

In his message, Janjalani talked about how the attack on SuperFerry 14 was carried out.

"A timing device was used. Just a watch. *Yung lakas*, 4x *na ginamit sa* (The power of the device was four times that of the one used in the attack on) Golden Bus Transit *sa* (in) Balintawak, (Quezon City)," Janjalani said in the text message that he sent ahead of Soliman's official statement.

A bus of the Golden Bus Transit was bombed on Edsa Balintawak on Oct. 18, 2002, killing two passengers and injuring 22 others. It followed a series of bombings that began in Malagutay, Zamboanga City.

Reading a statement recorded on the phone, Soliman said "the latest attack against WG&A is just a sample of things to come," adding that the Abu Sayyaf's "best action has yet to come."

Soliman taunted the government. "Still doubtful about our capabilities? Good. Just wait and see," he said.

"We will bring the war that you impose on us to your lands and seas, homes and streets. We will multiply the pain and suffering that you inflicted on our people," the statement read.

EPA/DENNIS SABANGAN

VILLAGERS on a motorbike pass by the remains of the SuperFerry 14 lying near Mariveles, Bataan.

Asked why the Abu Sayyaf chose WG&A, Soliman responded: "Because it's the largest commercial vessel. We targeted it for no particular reason at all, the name of the company is incidental."

Never forget

Soliman's statement came hours after it was first reported in the media via a text message, which read: "Our latest action on WG&A is our message to the Filipino nation. We'll bring to your lands and seas the war that you have inflicted upon Muslims."

Soliman mentioned three incidents, which he said also motivated the group to carry out what he referred to as "freedom missions."

"We will never forget Pata Island in Sulu, Dasalan and Baluk-Baluk Islands in Basilan, Malusbong in Palimbang, Sultan Kudarat," he said.

Soliman said the Abu Sayyaf would do everything "to punish the economy."

"May Allah punish you again through our hands," the statement ended.

The fire that engulfed SuperFerry 14 happened on the same day that an Abu Sayyaf leader, Hector Janjalani, was sentenced to life imprisonment for the kidnapping of American Jeffrey Schilling in 2000.

No hole

The two incidents were not related, according to Soliman. He said the Abu Sayyaf was not aware that the sentence would be handed down on Feb. 27.

The transportation secretary said that initial investigation showed there was no sabotage. "If there was such an explosion, they would see a hole. But so far, they have not found something like that. Let's wait for the result of the investigation, and let's not jump to conclusions," Mendoza said.

He said arson investigators and members of the special operations group of the Philippine Coast Guard had not found evidence that a blast, typical of explosives, occurred inside the ship.

Yesterday, 16 men from the Bureau of Fire Protection, and 18 from the PCG-SOG, were able to penetrate the passenger ship, now aground at Mariveles, Bataan near Sisiman Bay. *With reports from Christian V. Esguerra and Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Samar town mayor shot dead in cockfight arena; politics eyed

From page A1

waited outside the sports complex and served as lookouts.

A cockfighting aficionado, the mayor had been in the arena since 11 a.m. of Saturday, according to his wife.

Based on witnesses' accounts, the victim was shot in the right temple, said Chief Insp. Lope Lim, city police director.

Lim said Olaje's police escorts were caught by surprise and were not able to fire back. He also noted that many people had already started milling around the victim.

The gunmen commandeered a motorcycle and fled toward the city proper about 3 km away.

3 angles

Lim said investigators were pursuing three possible motives for the killing. "It could be politically motivated (because of) the fact that he was a mayor. Second, [it could be] business rivalry or ... some personal reasons," he said.

Emily swore that her husband, a copra buyer and one of the province's biggest fish dealers, had no business rivals. She said she also did not know anyone who had a personal grudge against him.

"It was politically motivated," she stressed.

Olaje, who belonged to the Nacionalista Party-Lakas, will be succeeded by his vice mayor, Francisco Mortero, who belongs to the Liberal Party. Mortero is seeking reelection under the ticket of LP mayoral candidate Flordelis Tan.

The slain mayor was also a known supporter of former Samar Rep. Rodolfo Tuazon (Lakas-CMD), who is running against incumbent Rep. Reynaldo Uy (LP) for the first congressional district of the province.

Reached by the INQUIRER through his mobile phone, Tuazon said he had asked the Commission on Elections to immediately place the city under its control to avoid a similar incident.

"The killing of Mayor Olaje was perpetrated to sow terror and harassment among my supporters, and I ask our authorities to immediately solve this crime," Tuazon said.

Hot spot

Earlier, Chief Supt. Dionisio Coloma Jr., police regional chief, had identified Calbayog as a potential "area of concern" in the May 10 elections due to intense political rivalry and the presence of armed men.

Olaje was the second incumbent public official to be shot and killed since Feb. 13 when Vice Mayor Juvy Magsino of Naujan, Oriental Mindoro, died in an ambush several hours after attending a Lakas-CMD campaign rally in Calapan City.

Emily admitted that with the death of her husband, she was now entertaining thoughts of dropping her mayoral bid.

The woman was also at the cockpit when her husband was killed. She was watching a cockfight from the bleachers section several meters away.

Olaje's body was brought to the Calbayog Funeral Homes and later to his house in Tarangnan, 56 km from the city.

The mayor left behind four children—Jude, 22; Jade Crystal, 20; John Anthony, 17; and Juliet, 15.

Olaje was a graduate of agriculture engineering at the University of the Eastern Philippines in Catarman, Northern Samar. He assumed his first and only public office when he won the mayoral race in the 1995 elections.

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Application deadline: 2 April 2004.

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Medical mission underscores shining moment of Filipinos

From page A1

patients and as many as 500 indigent patients a day.

At the Pineda Sports Center gym, four pediatricians tended to children, while four internists treated adults who had been prescreened by rural health workers under Dr. Rudy Ong.

Life-saving surgery

Over at the West Pampanga Hospital, a private facility in lieu of the Diosdado Macapagal Memorial Hospital which was then undergoing construction, eight surgeons, two nurses and three anesthesiologists performed 10 major operations a day, ranging from tumor removal to cleft palate reconstruction.

In another room, Dr. Antonio Gonzales, together with three American eye surgeons from Columbia Presbyterian University, New York, managed cataract surgeries for more than 20 patients.

The patients were all first-timers, who otherwise could never afford life-saving surgery.

6th mission

This is the sixth year that the FAPI has sent a medical mission. When the doctors leave, they would have plowed in $200,000 worth (FAPI's conservative estimate) of medicine and surgical equipment to the district and provincial hospitals, as well as rural health units, to be managed by the office of Lubao Mayor Dennis Pineda.

Surgeon Edilberto Beltran from Baltimore, who chairs this year's medical mission, comes from Lubao—the same hometown of President Macapagal-Arroyo. It is a healthy coincidence because it expedited the coordination of local logistical support that ensured a successful mission.

The yearlong preparation was more than a simple charitable endeavor since it passed the scrutiny of the Commission for Filipinos Overseas headed by Executive Director Jose Molano Jr.

Foundation donors

The presence of FAPI president Dr. Manuel Gatchalian, chief ENT surgeon from Union Memorial Hospital in Baltimore, underscored the importance of the medical mission as he personally supervised the activities in collaboration with two big US donors, the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation and the Morton and Jane Blaustein Foundation.

Gatchalian said the Philippines was the first foreign medical mission beneficiary stipulated by the US grants at the grantees' discretion through the representation of the Filipino-American doctors.

In previous medical missions, doctors reached out from the technological comforts of Baltimore to villages in rural Luzon—from Banawe to Batangas to Bicol. Each time, they saw up close that what ails the Filipino is poverty and malnutrition. And each time, they become more determined to sustain the FAPI's medical mission with vigor.

The most significant value of the mission is that Fil-Am doctors, moved by the spirit of Edsa, travel all the way to the Philippines to contribute their own personal resources, expertise, time and money (giving up a week's income from a lucrative practice runs up to five-figures worth in US dollars).

Asked why they keep coming back, Lubao medical mission co-chair, pediatrician Marietta Caragay, said: "The forced vacation-cum-homecoming is also a way to reconnect with relatives and countrymen."

Beltran added: "We want to give something back to the country of our roots."

Rescuers smell stench of death on ship

From page A1

spokesperson, said that there had been a mistake in the PCG tabulation of the ship's passengers who had been accounted for and those still missing.

Unreported passengers

Abоitiz Transport raised the number of people missing to 186. The adjustment was made after it was verified that the ferry had been carrying more people than initially reported, said Aboitiz spokesperson Gina Virtusio.

The boat had 899 passengers and crew onboard, of whom 712 had been rescued and one had died, she said.

Virtusio conceded that it was "a possibility" that many of the missing had died and their bodies were on the ship. The PCG had earlier said 165 were still missing but later withdrew the number, saying it had to be confirmed.

As the PCG and the ship owner tried to reconcile the statistics, President Macapagal-Arroyo reported that 142 were still missing and 753 had been rescued.

The missing might include passengers who had returned home, but failed to inform the PCG or Aboitiz, according to Gosingan.

One-third of ship

Consoling the families and friends of the missing, Ms Macapagal said: "The investigators have gone through one-third of the ship, and nobody was found."

She spoke to around 50 people awaiting their loved ones at the covered court inside the PCG headquarters compound in South Harbor, Manila. She came past 6 p.m. to the PCG headquarters on 25th Street, straight from a prayer rally at the nearby Quirino Grandstand in Rizal Park.

Regular updates

Ms Macapagal told the relatives of the missing passengers that the PCG would begin regularly giving them updates, either through verbal announcements or bulletins.

This came after she was met by relatives who complained that they were not being given information on what was happening in Mariveles, as they patiently waited in Manila.

Three days of waiting for her father has exhausted Sharon Aguirre, 29, of Imus, Cavite.

"It's hard to think that my father is there, getting burned, trapped inside the ship," said Aguirre in Filipino, her voice trembling.

Missing father

Since the fire hit SuperFerry 14, which her father Gabriel had boarded on Thursday evening to come home to his native Bacolod, Aguirre has been waiting.

And for the mother of two, who has been living with her father in Imus even when she had her own family, the waiting seems to have been endless.

"I feel very bad. They are not telling us anything. Why don't they just tell us once and for all that people are still trapped," Aguirre said, in an interview at the PCG.

Aguirre, with her relatives from Pasay City, Cavite and Bacolod, had been standing by for any news about the missing passengers.

False hopes

Save for newspaper, television, radio reports, and at times updates from the PCG, Aguirre and the other relatives of the missing have not been given official news about the sea tragedy by he ship's owner.

"It seems like they are trying to give us false hopes. Have pity on us. We feel like we are just hanging here, sitting, waiting for nothing," said Aguirre, speaking in behalf of her two younger siblings and mother.

Virtusio, however, said that the company was doing everything for the families of the missing, just as they had provided medical assistance, lodging and food subsidy for survivors.

"They are being taken care of. Some are booked in hotels, given lodging and transportation (subsidy). Others were transferred to the PPA (Philippine Ports Authority), while some opted to stay at the PCG to be closer (to the authorities)," Virtusio said in a phone interview.

'I need my father'

But for Aguirre, all such benefits are the least of her concerns.

"I need my father. I want to see him, know how he is doing. I do not need the accommodations and free meals," she said.

She related that the ship owner had not been exactly willing to give her any information since Friday. So she has been seeking information from other sources, including survivors who are billeted in hotels, and others recovering in hospitals around Manila.

High school students

In Cagayan de Oro City, 14-year-old Judy Roxanne Abatay of the Esperanza National High School in Misamis Oriental said she suddenly remembered the movie "Titanic" when a loud explosion was followed by the collapse of the ceiling, hitting the upper deck of the bed where she was lying down.

Abatay was with more than 100 other people going home to Northern Mindanao after attending the National Secondary Press Conference, an annual competition of students in sports, news and feature writing, held on Feb. 22 -26 in Sta. Cruz, Laguna.

"All the windows were shattered, the door flew to where we were sleeping. Most of my colleagues in that section were asleep when the explosion occurred. Later, I hear them shouting for help, they could not move because of the debris," she said.

Abatay said about 15 of her companions were probably trapped in the debris. They remain missing as of press time.

Adelina Catajoy, a schools supervisor in Northern Mindanao, said the next thing she remembered was the cold water off Corregidor.

Vivid images

Like Abatay, she too was very frightened that only the vivid images of the sinking of Titanic occupied her mind.

Abatay and Catajoy were among 117 people brought home to the region by Cebu Pacific yesterday morning.

Cris Joceryl Plantas, 17, of the Balingasag National High School thanked God that she finally made it home.

But she cried when she remembered three of their co-delegates.

Plantas said even as she left the disaster area, her friends, whom she only identified as Alexander, Jessa, Riza and Yoyong all of Jasaan, remain missing.

"The last time I saw them was when we went to our (sleeping) areas. They went to the Tourist section while I went to the Economy and agreed to see them again the next day. I never thought tragedy would come to us," she said.

"It has been three days, and still no word of them," said Ritzell Paculba, whose son Clynn, 16, remained unaccounted for.

"I hope God would make a miracle. Only he can bring back my son alive now," she added, managing a meek smile—something she has not done since Friday.

Cow sold

Her husband Daniel is more distraught. He has spoken little since learning of his son's fate.

"My husband is hurting. He sold our cow so he could buy Clynn new clothes. You know, all his things were new when he came to Manila," Ritzell said.

The couple—farmers from Laguindingan, Misamis Oriental—flew in from Cayagan de Oro City on Saturday afternoon. They are now billeted at the Bayview Park Hotel in Manila, together with around 40 survivors and relatives.

Clynn, a bright boy who wanted to be an engineer, is among the 16 students and teachers from Misamis Oriental and Iligan City who have not turned up from the burning vessel. They had taken part in the National Secondary Schools' Press Conference. *With reports from Luige del Puerto and AFP*

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2 Filipino seamen killed ...

From page A1

171-meter tanker flying the Singapore flag, sank about 80 km off the Virginia coast. The tanker was headed for Houston from New York with 24 Filipino and three Greek crew members.

Heideman said a Philippine Embassy representative would go to Virginia to see what assistance could be extended to the Filipinos. She did not identify the Filipino seamen who died, those who are missing or those who were rescued.

The Associated Press reported that three of the tanker's 27 crew members had died and 18 were still missing.

In Norfolk, Virginia, hospital chaplains helped four of the crew members talk to their families in the Philippines by telephone and were working to help the other two.

The tanker made an emergency call just after 6 p.m. EST (2300 GMT) Saturday, saying there had been an explosion on board, said Petty Officer Stacey Pardini of the Coast Guard in Portsmouth.

Fire on deck

The explosion occurred about 80 km east of Chincoteague, Virginia, after a fire started on the deck of the ship, said Lt. Chris Shaffer of Ocean City (Maryland) Emergency Services.

"When the rescue divers got to the scene, the fuel tanker was on fire, sinking and there were people in the water," Shaffer said.

Nine crew members have been accounted for, including one who was picked up by a commercial fishing boat and later died, said Coast Guard Senior Chief John Moss.

Three helicopters, three Coast Guard boats and a plane were still searching for survivors early Sunday.

Six men from the ship were taken by helicopter to Sentara Norfolk General Hospital, spokesperson Vicky Gray said. One was in critical condition, two were in serious condition and three were in good condition, she said. All are being treated for hypothermia.

One of the dead was taken to Atlantic General Hospital in Berlin, Maryland, spokesperson Toni Keiser said, along with two rescue divers who were treated and released for minor injuries.

A man died at Peninsula Regional Medical Center in Salisbury, Maryland, after he was brought there in critical condition, said nursing supervisor Betty Turner.

No more victims

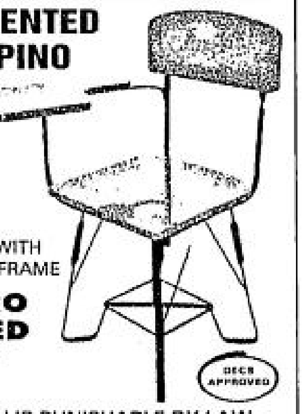
Gray and Keiser both said their hospitals were told not to expect to receive any more victims, and Keiser said extra emergency staff called in had been sent home.

The ship is a chemical tanker, built in 1982 and owned by a Greek company, Ceres Hellenic Shipping Enterprises Ltd. A company spokesperson confirmed the ship had a crew of 27 and said "there is no information yet on their fate."

Tony Redding, spokesperson for Ceres Hellenic, which managed the Bow Mariner, said the tanker had discharged some of its cargo in New York before leaving for Houston. Ceres Hellenic planned to send a technical crew from Greece on Sunday to assist the Coast Guard, Redding said.

The Coast Guard said it did not know how much of the ethanol was released into the water.

Redding said Ceres didn't know the cause of the explosion and was focused on the search and rescue mission. *AP*



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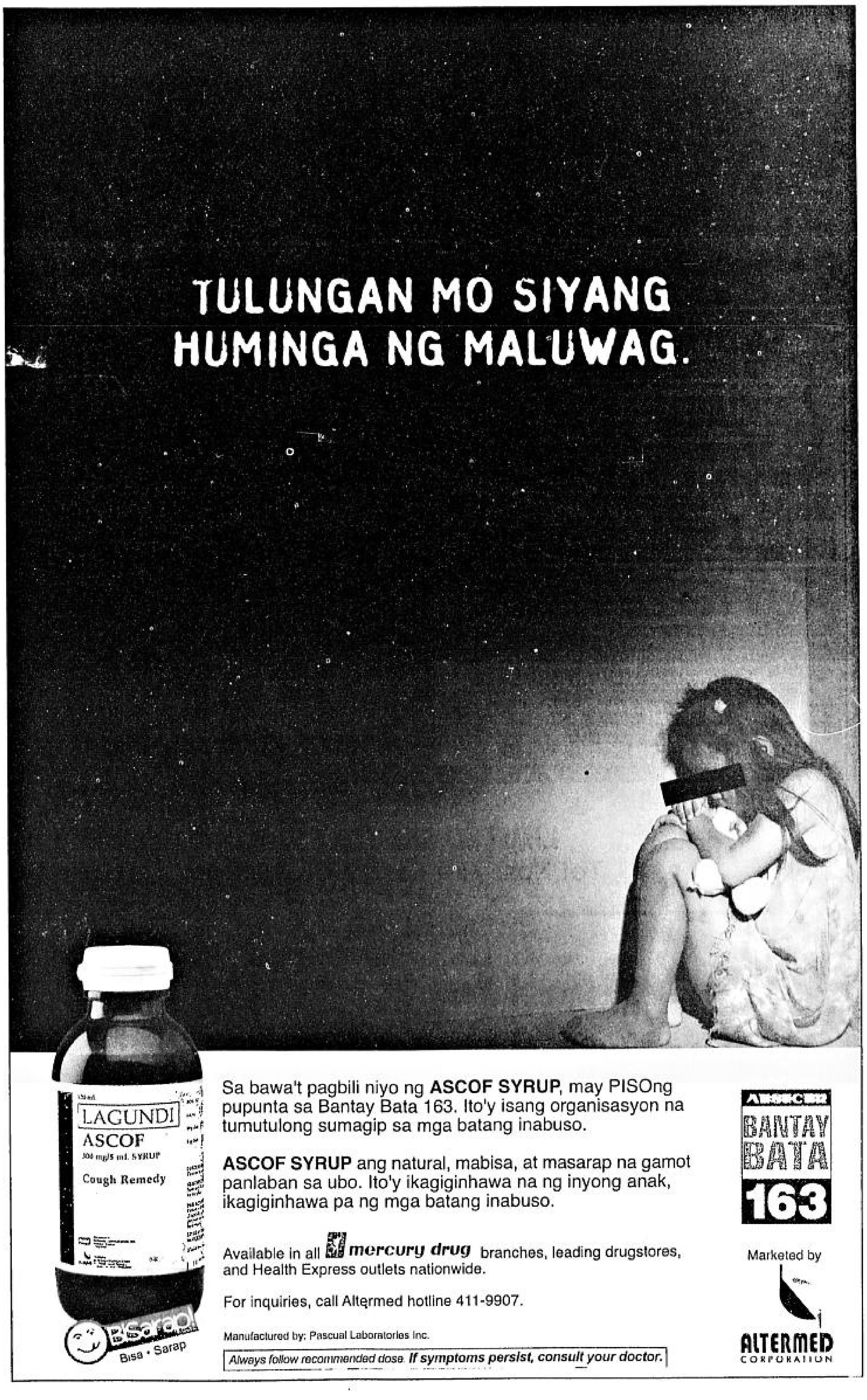

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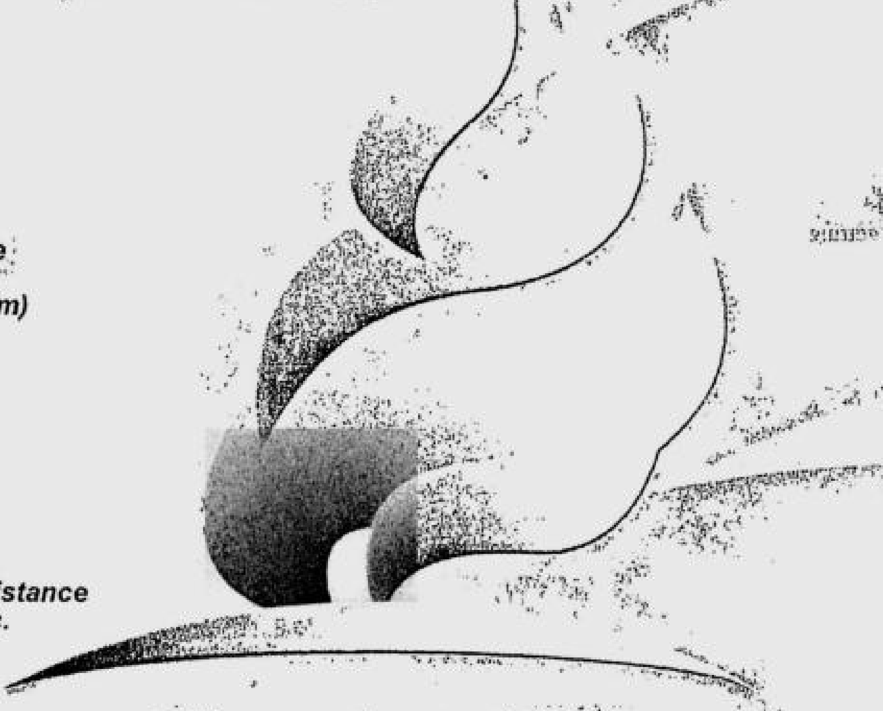

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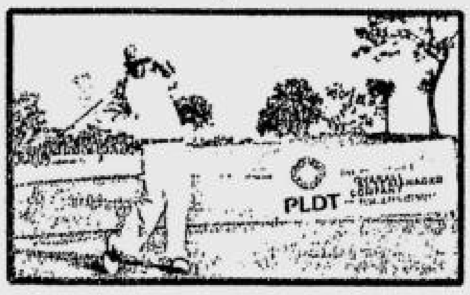

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2 pregnant women killed in SLEX fire

THREE persons, including two pregnant women, were killed when fire gutted a squatters' area along the South Luzon Expressway in Barangay San Antonio, San Pedro, Laguna, early yesterday morning.

Several others were also injured in the four-hour fire.

Calabarzon police director Chief Supt. Reynaldo Varilla identified the fatalities as five-months pregnant Divina Apostol, her 3-year-old son Dagul, and her sister-in-law Florence Encinas, who is said to be three-months pregnant.

Varilla quoted witnesses as claiming that they saw the fire coming from the victims' house at past midnight. He said the fire quickly spread to other houses because of strong winds.

Over 700 families lost their houses in the fire. Varilla said firemen who rushed to the area had a hard time controlling the fire because the area is along SLEX.

"Some fire trucks were forced to take the counterflow to be able to get near the site. Fortunately, the flow of vehicles was smooth at that time," Varilla said.

Police said most of the houses were made up of plywood and combustible materials that made the fire spread easily.

Residents in the area suspected that the blaze might have been done intentionally to remove the illegal tenants in the two-hectare lot.

Cop stations watched

Meanwhile, the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) has ordered an inspection of all police offices in the metropolis to ensure their safety from fires.

NCRPO Director Ricardo de Leon issued the order following last week's fire that razed the supply building at the Philippine National Police headquarters in Camp Crame.

The order was relayed to the five police districts and the 37 station commanders in the metropolis.

Aside from inspecting electric wiring in the offices, De Leon also ordered the holding of fire drills and seminars for police personnel in the five police districts.

De Leon has also ordered the repair and improvement of the NCRPO Headquarters in Camp Bagong Diwa after he saw several octopus connections in some offices.

These orders came as the country entered the Fire Prevention month of March, when fires are usually common.

Policemen are also advised not to neglect damaged wires and to always put off electrical equipment or even cell phone chargers when not in use. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau, and Edson C. Tandoc Jr.*

NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION

Notice is hereby given that the Amended Articles of Incorporation of **The Prudent Choice Insurance Agency Corporation (the "Corporation")**, which shortened the term of its corporate existence to end on **August 30, 2003** and thereby dissolving the said corporation on said date, has been approved by its Board of Directors and shareholders at duly constituted meetings both held on **July 30, 2003.**

All persons having claims against said corporation are requested to present same at the Corporation's principal place of business located at AIC Center, Escolta, Manila.

This announcement will serve as notice to all concerned of the legal dissolution of the aforesaid corporation.

(Sgd.) **ETHELWOLDO E. FERNANDEZ**
Corporate Secretary

(PDI - Feb 23, March 1 & 8, 2004)

Sale of pirated CDs continues despite tough gov't drive

By Tina Santos

DESPITE government efforts to curb audio and video piracy, elusive vendors of counterfeit CDs and VCDs continue to operate even right under the nose of lawmen in Caloocan City and Quezon City.

Several vendors openly sell their wares, including pornographic VCDs, along Rizal Avenue Extension in Monumento, Caloocan and Tandang Sora Market and Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City.

But policemen, instead of going after the illegal vendors, can be seen elbowing out legitimate buyers just to take their own pick of pirated VCDs and CDs.

In Monumento, motorcycle-riding policemen can often be seen making the rounds one after the other to collect their copy of the latest pirated smut films.

Protection

One vendor, who asked not to be named, told the INQUIRER that they were forced to supply the policemen with their wares "for our own protection."

"We're tired of playing hide and seek with them (cops). That's why, in order for them to spare us, we give in to their demands," the vendor said in Filipino.

Police authorities have been deputized to assist the Videogram Regulatory Board in clearing operations against vendors of pirated music and video compact discs.

A check made by the INQUIRER recently at the Tandang Sora Market on Tandang Sora and Visayas Avenues, showed vendors openly selling pornographic wares even to minors.

Tandang Sora Market is only a few meters away from a Police Community Precinct of the Central Police District Talipapa Station.

Creative

Meanwhile, some illegal vendors on Tandang Sora and Commonwealth Avenues have become creative with their operations. They provide buyers with catalogues listing the titles of the pirated CDs and VCDs.

A source said the vendors were cautious in displaying their wares to avoid getting caught.

"*Hindi masyadong bulgar ang bentahan dito, para hindi takaw huli* (They're quite discreet in their operations, to avoid getting caught)," said Elenita Joaquin, 45, a public school teacher who claimed to be a regular buyer of pirated VCDs.

"This is much cheaper than going to a movie house. I can even let my entire family watch it over and over again," she added.

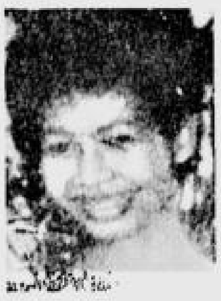
A fake CD sells at P30-P35 each, while a pornographic and movie VCD sells at P45-P50 each.

New law

Earlier, President Macapagal-Arroyo has signed into law the Optical Media Bill, where piracy in all forms—video, audio, software—might finally be licked.

The bill has been touted to have more teeth than its predecessor, a Marcos act that created the Videogram Regulatory Board in 1985.

Help us find this woman



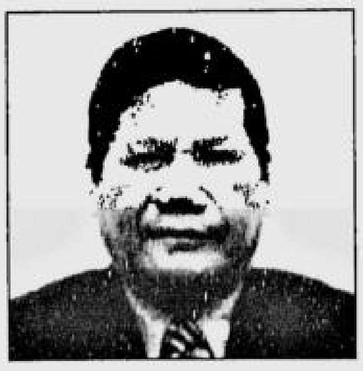
JEANETTE Gonzalvo y Hortizuela (right), 35, of Makati City, has been reported missing since Feb. 18.

Jeanette is 5'7" tall, has short hair, is fair, and has a slim built. She has a mental disorder.

She was last seen in black printed shorts, yellow T-shirt and blue slippers.

If found, please call tel. no. 899-90-16 or 896-15-01 and look for Marina Gonzalvo.

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC



Please be informed that the above person,
Mr. VIRGILIO VARONA LEYRETANA, SR.,
is no longer connected with
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since April 14, 2003.

It has come to our attention that Mr. Leyretana has very recently approached persons for the purpose of selling to them Sun Life Prosperity Funds.

Any transactions entered into by Mr. Leyretana will not be honored by the company.

(PDI - March 1, 2004)

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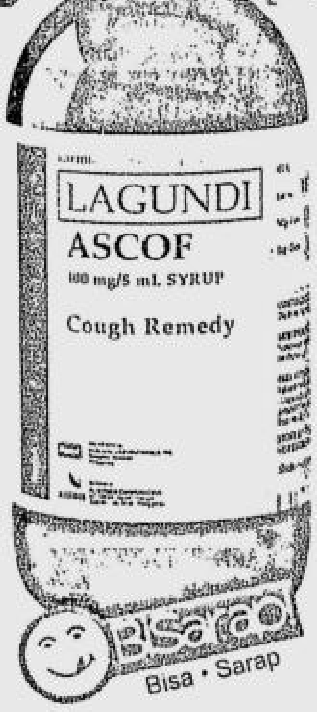

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Editor Abelardo S. Ulanday

U-turn slots set on Timog

THE METROPOLITAN Manila Development Authority has implemented the U-turn slot scheme on Timog Avenue in Quezon City.

MMDA General Manager Robert Nacianceno said the agency opened three U-turn slots to allow non-stop traffic in the area.

He added that the scheme will also be implemented along C-5 Road later this week. Earlier, five U-turn slots were opened from Libis to Ugong in Quezon Citys.

The MMDA official added that the agency would be implementing the U-turn slot scheme on Kalayaan/C-5, Santolan and P. Tuazon Avenue later this month.

The U-turn scheme, also called the clearway system, removes intersections and replaces these with openings through which vehicles could pass through to the other lane. *Margaux Ortiz*

2 in killing of UP student arrested

WET MYSTERY
Children wade through murky, stagnant water along Pasong Tirad in Makati City, which has been flooded for weeks. The source of the water and what government agency is responsible for clearing it are mysteries puzzling residents.
ERIK ARAZAS

By Tarra Quismundo

THE POLICE have arrested two suspects in the killing of a University of the Philippines student during a robbery in Sta. Mesa, Manila, two weeks ago.

Members of the Western Police District Homicide Section took into custody Richard Marzo, 33, and his brother, Francisco, 29, following a raid at their house in Manila early yesterday morning.

The two are currently being questioned for the shooting of 19-year-old Mary Joyce Lattao, a pharmacy student at the UP in Manila.

Lattao was shot twice in the face by one of three men who staged a robbery inside a G-Liner passenger bus along Ramon Magsaysay Boulevard at 8 a.m. on Feb. 15.

A suspect shot the student after she reportedly refused to hand over her bag.

At about 2 a.m. yesterday, lawmen acting on intelligence reports and accounts of witnesses swooped down on the house of the Marzos on Mindanao Extension, Sampaloc, Manila.

Witnesses yesterday tagged Marzo, a pedicab driver, as one of two men whom they saw getting off the bus after the robbery.

He, however, denied participating in the robbery, claiming he was at home when the incident happened.

Francisco, on the other hand, said that at the time of the robbery, he was on duty at the noodle house where he worked.

Police Chief Insp. Alex Yanquiling, WPD Homicide Section Chief, said witnesses had so far failed to identify Francisco as a suspect.

However, the police said they would continue keeping him in custody, pending the arrival of other witnesses who might link him to the robbery.

Yanquiling identified a third suspect, who is at large as a certain "Bravo."

Blaze fries police phone lines in QC

By Edson Tandoc Jr.

HELLO? HELLO!!! GRRR
?

DON'T blow your top when you try calling the Central Police District (CPD) headquarters in Quezon City and nobody answers.

They are not lazy in answering the phone. It is just that all the phones inside Camp Karingal in Sikatuna Village are out of order.

A fire that hit a residential area at the back of the police camp on Wednesday night burned the telephone lines, which have yet to be replaced.

Consequently, all the police offices in the camp, including the CPD's Tactical Operations Center, Criminal Investigation Unit and Mobile Patrol Unit, could not receive or send calls and fax transmissions.

Two-way radios

Policemen and civilian employees, however, manage to communicate with other's units and stations using two-way radios and cellular phones.

CPD officials expect the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. to restore communications lines by today.

At about 7 p.m. Wednesday, a fire erupted in Mapagkawanggawa Extension, Sitio Lambak, Barangay Krus na Ligas, which was just outside Camp Karingal.

Apart from shutting down the telephone lines, a woman was injured in the blaze and 115 families were left homeless.

Hot bath

Marina Aquino, 62, was taking a bath when the fire broke out.

She quickly put something on and hurried out of the toilet when she smelled something unusual. She was shocked to see their ceiling already in flames.

Her husband, Manuel, 67, managed to carry with him their television set. But their washing machine, refrigerator, and cash savings were lost.

Double whammy

Manuel works as an errand boy in Camp Crame, where a big fire also broke out a few hours before flames gobbled up his house.

His 36-year-old son, who still lives with them, is jobless.

When they went back to their house a day after the fire, only their metal folding bed was left.

They took it, repaired it, and yesterday, Aquino was sleeping on it as she waited at the evacuation center set up at Camp Karingal's covered basketball court.

The Aquinos are among 60 other evacuee-families staying at the evacuation center.

Tears for karaoke

When Holy Mass was held at the basketball court yesterday, Aquino cried. But not because she was touched by the homily.

The woman saw the priest's karaoke and remembered their karaoke, which was also burned.

"I should not have bought it if I had known this would happen," she said in Filipino.

But what really pains her, she said, was that she had been unable to watch her two favorite telenovelas: Sana'y Wala Ng Wakas of Jericho Rosales and Kristine Hermosa, and Claudine Baretto's Marina.

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ABC

Fatty food endanger Makati folk

DR. RUBEN Quiñones of the Makati Health Department is blaming fatty food sold at fast food restaurants for the high incidence of cardiovascular diseases among the city's residents.

Quiñones aired concern over the effects of eating too much fat-laden food after a study funded by pharmaceutical company Merck, Sharp and Dohme (MSD) showed that many Makati residents were at risk from hypertension.

Smoking follows as a top potential killer in the city. *Margaux Ortiz*

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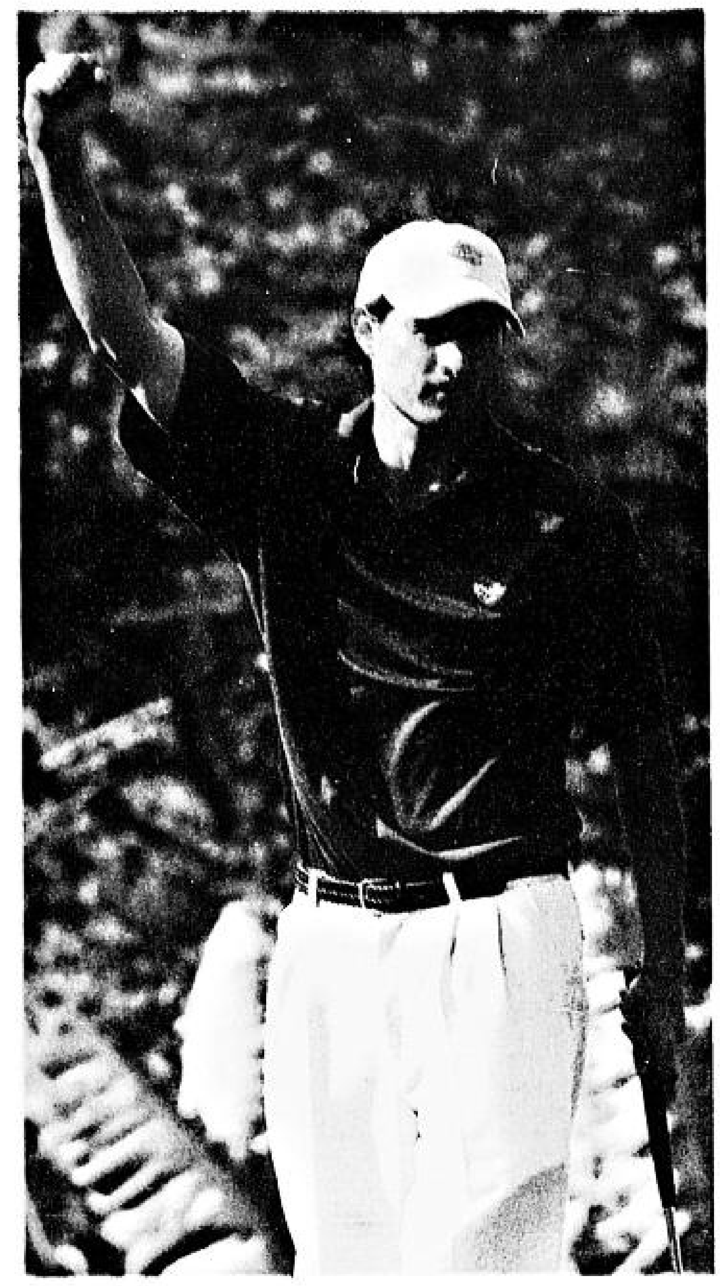

MICHAELS pumps his fist after sinking his final putt in the RP Open at the Riviera in Silang, Cavite. Michaels shot a final round 69 to turn back Pagunsan by 3 shots.

ROMY HOMILLADA

WHAT'S INSIDE

- Gin Kings spoil Alvin's milestone /A28

- In-form Jenny ties for third, bags P2M /A26

Michaels foils Juvic, snatches RP Open

By Jong Arcano

SILANG, Cavite—Before he planed in from Atlanta, American Edward Michaels was doubting his future in the game. His swing was a virtual wreck, his confidence low. Worse, the modest wad of cash in his pocket was fast thinning out.

With his wife tagging along to keep his emotions in check, the world turned around yesterday for Michaels as he outdueled history-chasing Filipino amateur Juvic Pagunsan to capture the 88th DHL-Philippine Open golf championship by three strokes at the Langer course of the Riviera Golf and Country Club.

Michaels, who had never finished higher than 26th in all the pro events he had played before deciding to try his luck in Asia, capped his memorable victory with a 2-under-par 69 for a 72-hole aggregate of 282.

He foiled Pagunsan's bid of becoming the first amateur to top the RP Open in 37 years.

The 27-year-old Michaels pulled away early with four birdies on the first six holes then survived a rule infraction in the bunker on the 15th to clinch his career breakthrough.

The victory worth $25,000 of the $150,000 pot buried his misfortunes in his Asian Tour debut last month in Thailand where he missed the halfway cut.

That forgettable performance sent Michaels and his wife Missy, who carries the bag for him, rushing back to Atlanta to work on his swing with his coach. They arrived earlier than most of the foreign entries and got into the course for practice on Sunday.

Pagunsan bogeyed his first two holes and was virtually out of it after picking up his third bogey on the sixth and falling behind by five. He finished with a 3-over-par 74 and a 285 aggregate.

Still, it was a scintillating performance for an amateur who carried the hopes of local fans let down by their pro stars.

The country's best local pro performer, Antonio Lascuna, was on his way to a Top 10 finish until he tripped on a bogey-double bogey on the last two holes. He settled for a 76 and finished tied for 11th with defending champion Rick Gibson of Canada (72).

Danny Zarate and amateur Jay Bayron tied for 16th and Angelo Que shared 21st spot in the event presented by San Miguel Beer and backed by Pagcor and Mitsubishi Motors.

Thus ended a controversy-wracked Open that went through a change of venues and was snubbed by its foremost name player, Frankie Miñoza, on the eve of the tournament over the organizers' failure to give his Japanese friend a free slot.

And Michaels, a graduate of Vanderbilt University, provided the tournament with a bizarre ending.

Not among the favorites before he teed off, Michaels became the first American to win since Kevin Wentworth (1997, Camp John Hay) and joined the elite club of players who won the tournament on their first try.

"It's definitely very special, my wife and I are very happy about it," said Michaels.

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MICHAELS/ A26

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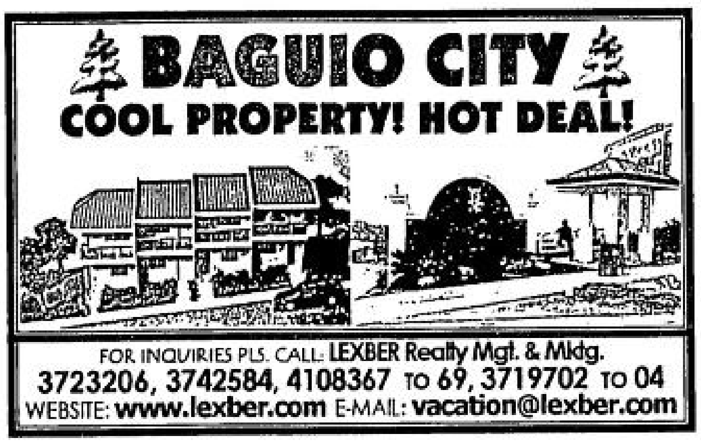

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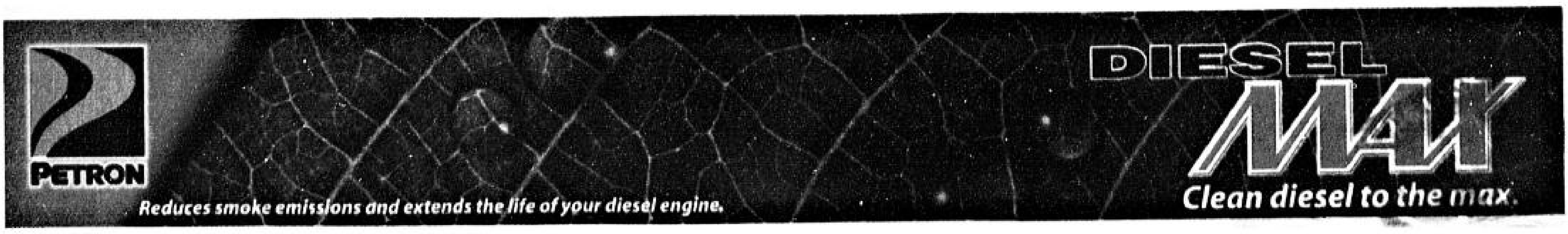

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Reyes, Kiamco barge into Asian 9-ball semifinals

FILIPINOS Efren "Bata" Reyes and Warren "Smiling Face" Kiamco beat Japanese Satoshi Kawabata, 9-3, and Korean Jeong Young-hwa, 9-8, respectively, to advance into the semifinals of the first leg of the San Miguel Beer (SMB) Asian 9-Ball tournament yesterday at the Pool Haven billiards hall in Clark Quay, Singapore.

The 49-year-old Reyes took a 4-0 start, extending his streak of racks won to 12, counting his eight racks run to close out his second round date with Singapore's Bernard Tey.

Reyes could have claimed his 13th rack victory had he not muffed what looked like an elementary length-of-the-table shot on the fifth ball that led to Kawabata's ice-breaker.

"Kawabata is good, he has beaten me once in Japan. It's a good thing I started hot and it frustrated him," said Reyes.

Kawabata practically sealed his doom on the sixth frame. After sinking the first eight colored balls, Kawabata missed a routine straightforward shot on the ninth, leaving the yellow striped ball hanging on the edge of a corner pocket.

"What happened was just like my commercial," said Reyes, referring to his television ad for a fast-food chain. "After that I know the game was mine."

The second-seeded Filipino will face Taiwanese Chen Huang Wu, who nipped defending champion Yang Ching Shun, 9-7.

Cebuano Kiamco, twice leg runner-up in the tour inaugural last year, posted a cliffhanger over the fourth-seeded Jeong.

Kiamco was given up for dead after Jeong's 5-9 combination made it 7-2 with the Korean breaking on the 10th frame.

Luckily for Kiamco, Jeong missed to pocket the one-ball after sinking the black eight on his serve. Kiamco cashed in with a 1-9 combo of his own.

"What I did was hit stronger and pay less attention to ball control," said Kiamco.

The gamble paid off as Kiamco sank at least one colored ball without scratching on his last four breaks culminated by a run out on the final frame.

Kiamco will next test the mettle of India's Alok Kumar, Francisco "Django" Bustamante's conqueror and a 9-8 winner over two-time world champion Chao Fong-Pang of Chinese Taipei in the quarterfinals. *With a report from Marlon Bernardino*

Jenny ties for third, bags ₱2M

By Jong Arcano

THE "BIG W" almost came and Jenny Rosales just made everybody know that she's serious about it.

Unable to match the scorching pace put on by Annika Sorenstam, Rosales did the best that she could and rewarded herself with an impressive tie for third place in the cash-rich ANZ Ladies Masters at the Royal Pines Golf Club course in Gold Coast, Australia.

A hot charge of consecutive birdies on her first three holes and four of the first five didn't last long enough for Jenny who went on to post a 4-under-par 68 for a 277 total like Australian Kylie Pratt in her first tournament of the season.

The 25-year-old Rosales started with a 72, sizzled with a 65 in the next round but slowed down with another 72 on Saturday.

Sorenstam, in full control after a 31 in the front nine, had an eagle-aided 7-under 65 to beat Karen Stupples of England by four strokes at 269. Stupples scored a 68.

The Swede sensation who made history when she played against the men last year in The Colonial pocketed about $169,000, starting the year with another display of brilliant shotmaking.

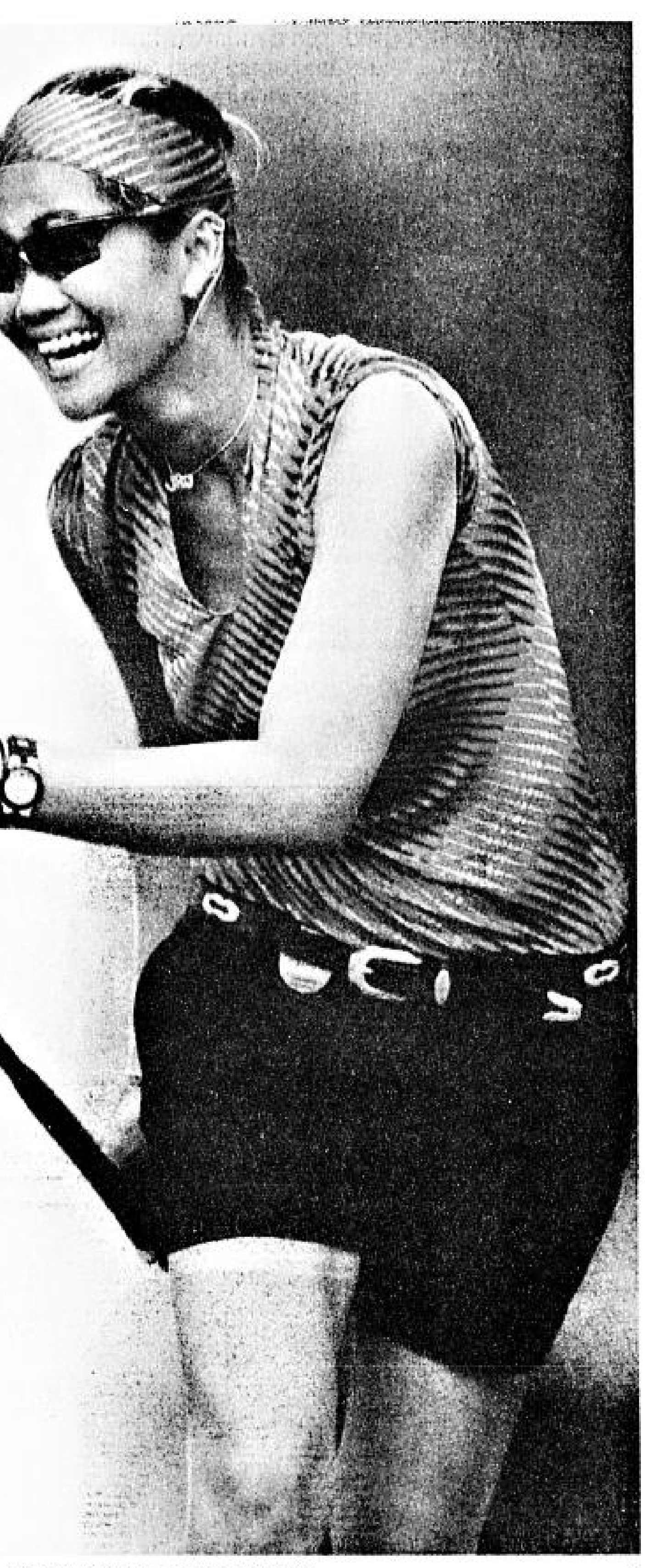
Rosales pocketed $40,550 (about P2.28 million) for placing third. Sorenstam won $100,000 while Stupples received $67,500.

That justifies her nonappearance in the just-concluded Philippine Open where the field was severely punished by the devilish winds. Rosales, endorser of PLDT Global and American Eye Center, herself had said that she would be lucky to make the cut in the Open considering the conditions.

When she fired a 65 in the second round to move within two shots of the lead, Rosales said she was glad she didn't accept the invitation.

"I was invited to play, but I'd rather be here," Rosales said.

Jenny and her swing coach, Bong Lopez, fly back to Manila today and will immediately leave for Tucson, Arizona, where the first leg of the LPGA Tour—the Welch's/Fry Championship—is set on March 11-14.



ROSALES frolics on the 15th hole. AP

SPORTSWATCH

Tour Pilipinas reset April 15-May 2

ORGANIZERS of the Tour Pilipinas have postponed the multi-stage race for April due to unfinished road repairs and requests by local government unit (LGU) officials that it would be more ideal for the event to be staged after the school year has ended. Mar Mendoza, Tour Pilipinas Inc. executive director, said the Tour, originally scheduled for March 18 to April 4, will be staged instead from April 15 to May 2. The race would technically start April 12 when the Tour entourage caravans to Sorsogon. Tour chair Bert Lina approved the postponement after learning about the unfinished repairs on the route.

Manila to stage First Park Volley

THE MANILA Sports Council (Masco), in cooperation with the Philippine Amateur Volleyball Association (Pava), will stage the First Bulilit Park Volley Championships on March 27 and 28 at the Luneta Park in Manila. A park volley clinic was conducted Saturday at the San Andres Gymnasium to serve as a precursor to the tournament, according to Masco chair Arnold "Ali" Atienza. International Volleyball Federation (FIVB) Development Commission official Ramon "Tats" Suzara and Pava Referees Commission chair Victor Abalos took charge of the clinic, with assistance from the national volleyball squad.

Tennis and sports youth camp at Subic

SPORT Development Asia will bring Nike Tennis and Sports Youth Camp to Subic Bay for the third consecutive year. The event will be held during the Easter Holiday starting March 27 and ending on April 7. Campers will receive five hours a day of on-court instruction from the experienced coaching staff of the SBMA International tennis center. Outdoor activities will also be organized. All campers will receive Nike T-shirt. Those interested may contact Beeyong Sison (0917-8323933) George (0918-5763513) and Francis (0917-8223822). Or communicate at Subic Bay International Tennis Center: Subic Bay Freeport Zone 2222 Philippines at Tel: +63-(0)47-252-2885 and 86; fax: +63-(0)47-252-2884 and mobile: +63-917-832-3933.

10 teams enter NBDL cagefest

TEN teams will see action in the NBDL (National Basketball Development League) tournament starting on March 8 at the UM gym. These are Lt. Gen. Nestor Santillan's Philippine Air Force, Edmund Espiritu's MICTS Transport, Alex Wang's Wangs Ball Club, Peter "Kay" Lee's Hongkong Tea House, Mr. and Mrs. Estelito Mendoza's Rev Magazine, Dunamis, Philippine Navy, Mail & More and Mike Dulias' Mediatrix. Tournament organizer Ted Magno has set a meeting among the team managers and coaches at 2 p.m. on March 3 at the PSC Cafeteria, ground floor, PSC Administration Bldg., Rizal Memorial Sports Complex, to discuss the format, schedule and payment of fees.

NCA stages 7-cock derby at Araneta

MORE than 60 fights have been lined up in today's National Cockers Association (NCA) 7-Cock Derby today at the air-conditioned Araneta Coliseum. Derby hosts are Pampanga's Jet and Joel Fernando, Jun and Rudy Jingco, Gerry and Alex Escalona and the Madlambayan Brothers. On tap is the 3-cock elimination round while the finale is on Wednesday. The JNS 808 RT 114 of Mayor Nic Patenia and Ruel Ricafort emerged as solo champion in the NCA 7-Cock Derby last Feb. 18 after posting seven wins. Meanwhile, Araneta Coliseum's new *sabong* schedule (every Tuesday and Thursday) will begin on March 16 and 18 with a 7-cock derby to be hosted by Mario Villamor, Louie Cua and NYS Group.

Slasher Cup gets 80 additional entries

ROLIGON Mega Cockpit's biggest promotion this month, billed as "Slasher Cup ng Masa 6-Cock Derby," on the 24th, 26th, 29th and 31st, got a big boost yesterday with the inclusion of more than 80 entries. This is because the "Largahan 5-Cock Derby" scheduled this week will no longer push through but will be merged with the "Slasher Cup" derby, according to Roligon owner Rolly Ligon. More than 200 entries are expected for the event offering P1.5 million in prizes, said Ligon. To host the "Slasher Cup" derby is tabloid executive Rey Briones, who will get a full backing from Roligon Mega Promotions. Briones said entry fee is P8,800. The champion handler and gaffer will get P100,000 and P50,000 respectively. The fastest kill champion gets P100,000. Reservation of cockhouses is open and interested parties may contact 833-2275, 833-1638, 852-9812 and 852-9774 (look for Shirley, Donna or Tiling).

Pacquiao's Ring belt arriving March 5

By Salven L. Lagumbay, *Contributor*

FRESH from signing a multi-fight, multimillion-dollar deal with cable giant HBO, reigning consensus featherweight king Manny Pacquiao is about to be bestowed with what is perhaps the highest honor in boxing—US-based Ring Magazine's championship belt.

Ring Magazine's Nigel Collins will be flying in on March 5 to award Pacquiao with the belt.

Pacquiao earned the right to wear the coveted strap after his stunning demolition of then featherweight king Marco Antonio Barera in November in San Antonio, Texas, a fight the Ring declared in its latest issue to be the biggest upset of 2003.

The award will put Pacquiao alongside other pugilistic greats who have recently received The Ring belt, such as Lennox Lewis, Roy Jones Jr., Bernard Hopkins, Oscar De La Hoya, Shane Mosley, Ricardo Mayorga, Corey Spinks, Kosta Tsyu and Barrera.

Collins will only be the second editor of the 82-year Ring Magazine, regarded as "the Bible of Boxing," to visit the country.

Ring founder and longtime editor, the legendary Nat Fleischer, dropped by the Philippines in the '50s while on a tour of the Orient and even met with President Ramon Magsaysay.

Collins, only the sixth editor in the history of Ring Magazine, plans to follow in Fleischer's footsteps and pay a courtesy call on President Macapagal-Arroyo. In fact, Collins plans to award the belt to Pacquiao in the presence of Ms Macapagal at the Malacañang Palace.

Collins, who's also a well-known boxing historian, plans to pay homage to other Filipino ring legends during his weeklong stay here, including Gabriel "Flash" Elorde and Pancho Villa, both of whom received Ring championship belts during their careers.

"Because of this trip," Collins said, "I've been looking into the history of Filipino boxing and I'm surprised at how many great Filipino fighters have come to the United States."

Michaels foils . . .

From page A25

Michaels—he took a two-stroke penalty on the 15th for brushing aside a leaf in the bunker with his foot—Missy was there to keep her husband focused on his game.

"I told him that he still had a two-shot lead with three holes to play," said the blue-eyed Missy.

Michael did just that, hitting a big birdie on the 16th after two superb shots with the driver and the 3-wood then chipping to within inches of the cup.

As soon as Edward holed a six-footer for par on the final hole, he and Missy kissed and got locked in a long, sweet embrace to celebrate the end of their wait for glory.

POC: Chance for heroism gone down the drain

BARE EYE

Recab Trinidad

THE MAN must be averse to merrymaking, or maybe he hates being swept in a triumphant stampede and going up on a victory ride.

If not, why hasn't Philippine Olympic Committee president Celso Dayrit done the heroic, the apt and necessary move?

There were many concerned calls, mainly from objective and concerned sports followers, who sincerely believe Dayrit should have put his foot down and ruled heroically on the pestering leadership mess inside the country-less Basketball Association of the Philippines, BAP for short.

Last heard of, Dayrit was packing his bags for Athens to attend an International Olympic Committee meeting.

It seemed he wanted an opinion of his elders in the IOC on the troubles now hounding the BAP.

Problem is that the IOC knows that nobody else is in a better position to evaluate [illegible] BAP problem than Dayrit himself.

He swims in a single murky pool with other sports associations in Manila, so why ask those creaky old fogies at the IOC the condition of the pool in RP?

In short, Dayrit is here as POC head to help the international Olympic body put sanity and order among national sports bodies in his country.

He must behave like a sensible and respectable gentleman.

***

Look, by refusing to rule gallantly, in the manner of an Olympian, on the basketball leadership crisis, Dayrit has been accused of many things.

Of course, the guy may just be trying to live up to his billing as a cool, sane, well-adjusted gentleman.

Unfortunately for Dayrit, his dilly-dallying, his bland refusal to do what's generally perceived to be proper and heroic spoke volumes on the emptiness of his leadership.

He continues to be looked upon as both gutless and limp-wristed.

Anyway, there's this ready suspicion that Dayrit has refused to do what's right for fear that a major block in the POC would dump him in the forthcoming poll.

This being an Olympic year, it follows that an election of new Philippine Olympic Committee officials will be held after the Athens Olympiad.

***

For the record, Sen. Robert Jaworski last week wasted no time and blasted Dayrit for seeking the assistance of the IOC on how to resolve the basketball leadership controversy in the country.

Jaworski called Dayrit's action of bringing the issue to the IOC as "ridiculous and embarrassing for all of us."

Jaworski stressed that as POC head, Dayrit should promote justice, fair play, sportsmanship and respect for the rule of law.

Jaworski singled out the recognition bestowed by the proper courts on the Basketball Association of the Philippines Inc. represented by Nic Jorge.

Well, it's no secret what Graham Lim, a certified Chinese who runs amateur basketball affairs here in his capacity as BAP secretary general, has violated.

No, not only our immigration laws after he falsely represented himself as Filipino in acquiring a passport and subsequent travel documents.

He wantonly violated the trust of the public when he pawned the future of the Philippine basketball team to Cebuana-Lhuillier which has been given the authority to conduct national tryouts with the purpose of forming future national teams.

***

After Lim shamelessly dumped the PBA offer to alter its calendar and form the strongest possible squads for both the Asian Games and the Asian Basketball Confederation (ABC) championship, the POC could have gone out of its way and called Lim's attention.

The least Lim could've done, if there's a drip of decency left in his alien veins, was to have thanked the PBA for its past involvement in the Asian Games basketball tournaments.

It could, of course, be the height of irresponsibility if the POC failed to note what Lim has achieved by sending weak *pulot-pulot* squads which he tried to sell as national teams in international meets, like the previous ABC in China where RP landed second to the last.

Lim has succeeded in bringing shame not only to Philippine basketball but to the whole country as well.

How Dayrit has agreed to play it sweet on Lim & Co., despite the crimes they have committed against the national flag, clearly showed the kind of jellyfish leadership in our national sports hierarchy.

Sports and Olympism being mainly about backbones, the failure of the POC to move and rule at a time when it should, could amount to a crime against country: treason.

MANOTOC hits his second shot on the seventh hole. RYAN LIM PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

PAL INTERCLUB

Luisita caps record 5th win in row with big round

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY— Luisita produced a runaway final round of 258 points at the Pueblo de Oro course yesterday to cap its unchallenged march to a record fifth straight Philippine Airlines Interclub Seniors Championship.

Iggy Clavecilla, who is still good enough to challenge for the national amateur championship, paced Luisita with 56 points on a two-under-par 70—a score that seniors rookie Tommy Manotoc matched for Wack Wack—to clinch the individual crown.

King Sumulong backstopped Clavecilla with 52 and Bong de Guzman, Alex Montelibano and Richie Garcia contributed 50 apiece under the eight-to-play, five-to-count format.

Rookie Francis Gaston and Lucio Yan came up with 48 apiece and Madoka Amano carded 44 that did not count for the Tarlac-based Luisitans, who posted a record 508 total in clinching their 12th title since the division was introduced in 1987.

Hot scoring

Manotoc's hot scoring helped Wack Wack amass 238 points that gave the Mandaluyong parbusters second place by one point over Alabang, 471-470.

Manila Southwoods fired 244 to place fourth with 466. Villamor Golf Club was fifth with 461.

Butch Brodett added 48 points for Wack Wack, Pablo Soon had 47, Tetu Santos made 45 and and two 44s completed the team's 238 for the day.

Manotoc, who will be representing his old club Canlubang when the regular men's tournament starts March 3, opened up with a 52 and emerged top individual golfer with 108.

Very consistent

"The guys played very, very consistently," said Luisita skipper Rudy Samson. They deserve to win—again."

Rene Go, Rolly Uy, Blasito Velez, Mike Celdran and Art Empamano combined for 235 at Del Monte to go with their 240 back home to rule the Founders Division with 475.

And Crystal Springs shot 211 at Pueblo de Oro—thanks to Josefino Villanueva's 50, the 45 of Allan Mercado, the 40 of Constante Foronda and the 38s of Bob Howard and Fred Viray—to retain the Sportswriters Division diadem.

ABS-CBN Global, Airbus Industrie, CNN International, GE Aircraft Engines, Golden Nugget Hotel Las Vegas, Johnnie Walker, Manila Broadcasting Corp., Radio Mindanao Network, Royal Caribbean International and UMBN are the major sponsors this year.

Joey 92.3, 96.3 Wrock and 105.1 Crossover were the corporate backers while Asia Brewery Inc., Boeing, Boysen Pacific Paint, Century Park Hotel, INQ7.net, Jam 88.3, Tanduay Rhum and www.philstar.com were the other supporters.

Founders Division

The Riviera Golf and Country Club collected 228 at Del Monte and 238 at Puebo de Oro to capture second in the Founders Division with 466, followed by Manila Golf and Country Club 232-461 and Negros 234-452.

Eagle Ridge shot 208 at Pueblo de Oro to settle for second in the Sportswriters Division with 421. Third was Philippine Navy after coming up with 218 for 419. *With a report from Ernesto Gonzales*

THE COMPLETE RESULTS

Championship Division

Luisita 508 (250-258); Wack-Wack 471 (233-238); Alabang 470 (231-239); Southwoods 466 (222-244); Villamor 461 (225-236);

Sportswriters Division

Crystal Springs 424 (213-211); Eagle Ridge 421 (213-208); Phil Navy 419 (201-218); Maharlika 414 (202-212); Lanang 412 (201-211); Bacolod 407 (207-200); Sienna Plantation 407 (203-204); Baguio 404 (201-203); Club Filipino 387 (190-197); UP Tee Jots 379 (186-193)

Founders Division

Pueblo De Oro 475 (240-235); Riviera 466 (238-228); Manila Golf 461 (229-232); Negros 452 (218-234); Valley 445 (219-226); Canlubang 442 (222-220); Cebu 441 (211-230).

DLSU upsets SSC, gains Nestea beach volley finals

By Marc Anthony Reyes

PROPELED by a late blast of power spikes, La Salle stunned defending champion San Sebastian College, 21-19, yesterday to lead three other pairs making the April excursion to Boracay for the Nestea Beach Volley 2004 finals.

Janley Patrona and Hansei Go broke a 19-all standoff with a pair of wallops to pull the rug from under crowd favorites Arman Canilang and Jershon del Rosario of SSC on the last day of the Luzon eliminations at the Rockwell Center.

"We knew we can beat them," said both Patrona and Go. "So we just tried to minimize our mistakes and when we did, that gave us the confidence to win it."

It was a heartbreaker of a loss for Canilang and Del Rosario who entered the match unbeaten in three games. La Salle swept all its four matches to nail the finals ticket.

Joining them in the April 14-16 Boracay showdown were Far Eastern University, College of St.Benilde and University of the Philippines.

Adamson, University of Baguio, CSB and Letran made it in the women's category.

Eight more teams in both the men's and women's categories will advance to the finals after the Visayas and Mindanao eliminations on March 12-14 in Cebu City.

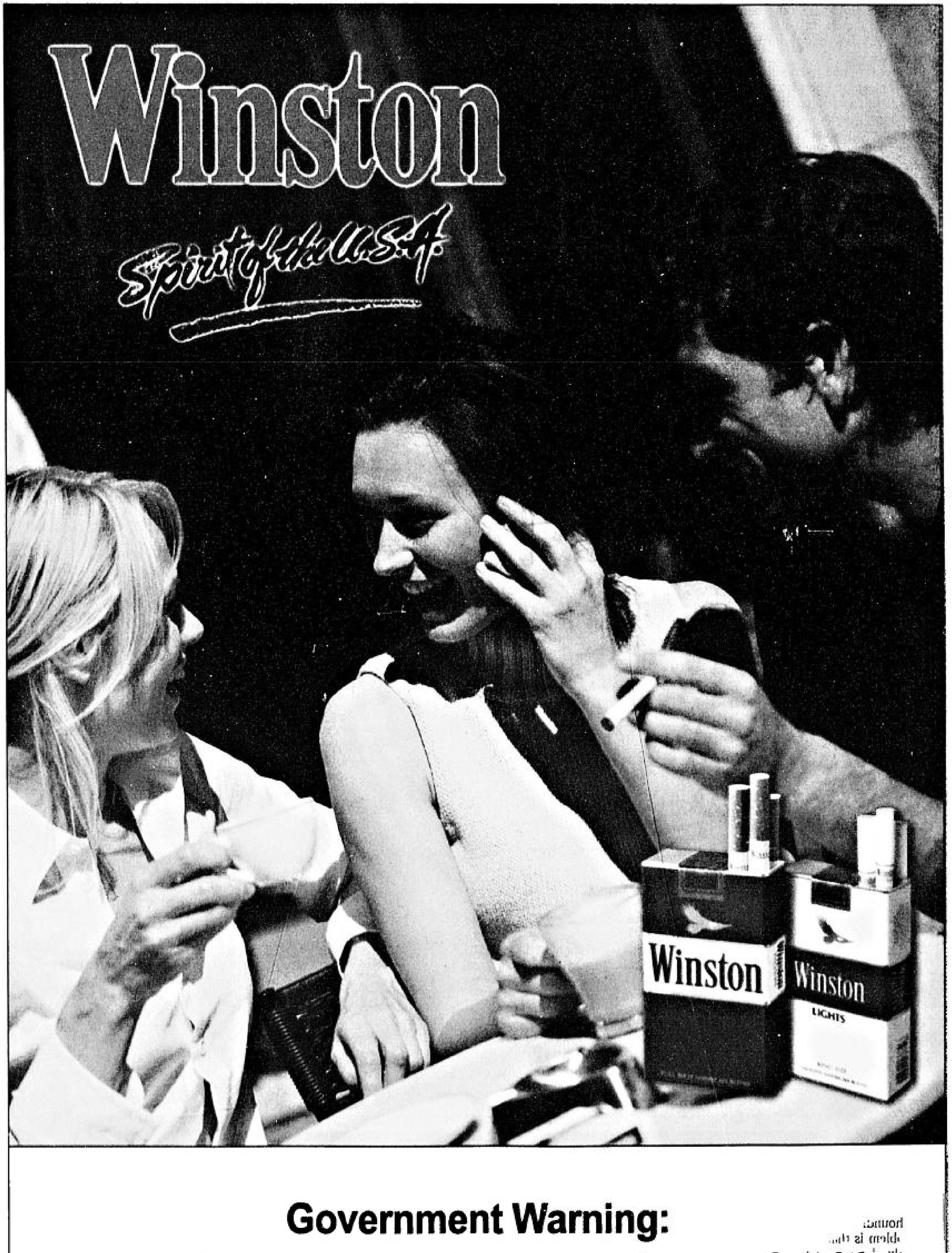
In an earlier match, Jarod and Jerrico Hubalde disposed of Roldan Garcia and William Masbang of Pampanga Agricultural College, 21-11, to book UP's ticket to Boracay.

CSB's Raymond Yoldi and Arnold Laniog thrashed Adamson's Sherwin Meneses and Limuel Gatchalian (21-12), while FEU's Roland Macahia and Jessier Lopez defeated UP Los Baños' John Mark Pangilinan and Aladin Poblete, 21-15.

In women's action, Cathlea Villaluz and Genelyn Alemania of Letran dumped Philippine School of Business and Art's Sherie Ann Garcia and Margarette Maranon, 21-7.

Bannered by Raquel Ordonez and Ivy Lores, CSB upset crowd darling Raine Romero and Brenda Galicia of the University of Asia and the Pacific, 21-18, to make it to the Nestea finals for the first time.

BLAZING A TRAIL: For the first time in UAAP history, De La Salle won the tennis titles in both the men's and women play. Standing from left, assistant coach Taddy Cruz, Janet Uy, Sherry Rose Ong, Berry Sepulveda (MVP),Krissy Alina, Catherine Flores, Michelle Panis (Rookie of the Year),Nico Faller, Yannick Guba (MVP), Edu Diez, Irwin de Guzman (Rookie of the Year) and head coach Roland Kraut. Seated are Donn Riego De Dios, Chase Tinio and Paolo Olbes. Team managers are Vince Pacheco and Bobby de Ocampo.



Government Warning:
Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health.

Embattled Hotdogs seek NBA veteran

IN DIRE need of an import, Purefoods has trained its sights on a former National Basketball Association veteran to replace Lenny Cooke who tore his achilles heel during the TJ Hotdogs' debut against the Coca-Cola Tigers.

Player-agent Mike Gonzales of AMG Sports said the Purefoods team management has expressed interest in signing up Anthony Bonner, a six-year NBA veteran, to reinforce the TJ Hotdogs when they go up against the Shell Turbochargers in General Santos City on Thursday.

The Hotdogs are shopping around for a new import after Cooke underwent surgery to repair his left achilles tendon last week.

Team officials have ruled out Cooke, the top high school player in the US before Lebron James, from playing in the conference.

The 6-foot-8 Bonner was drafted and saw action for the Sacramento Kings through 1990-1993 before abruptly ending his NBA career with the New York Knicks, where the former St. Louis University stalwart played until the 1995 season.

"He (Bonner) has impressive credentials to show and I believe he's capable of filling the void left by Cooke," said Gonzales.

PBA media bureau chief Willie Marcial said the TJ Hotdogs should be able to field in an import on Thursday during the league's first out-of-town sortie of the season.

"Otherwise, the team will be penalized for playing without an import," said Marcial, citing a league rule that slaps a fine on teams without imports for three consecutive play dates.

After Bonner's tour of duty in the NBA, the 36-year-old forward brought his act to Italy, Greece, Turkey and Russia before landing in the training camps of several NBA teams in the 2002 season.

Gin Kings spoil Alvin's career gem

By June Navarro

BARANGAY Ginebra stole the thunder from Alvin Patrimonio's career milestone by walloping Purefoods, 100-85, last night in the Gran Matador PBA Fiesta Conference at the Araneta Coliseum.

Exploiting the absence of Lenny Cooke, Eric Menk made the shaded lane his own fortress, banging in 32 points and hauling down 15 rebounds as the Gin Kings followed up their conquest of the Shell Turbochargers in the season's PBA opener.

In the second game, Asi Taulava and Randy Holcomb combined for 57 points to power Talk 'N Text past Shell, 98-88.

The Phone Pals improved to 2-0 like the Gin Kings, while the Turbo Chargers dropped 0-2. Purefoods stood at 1-1.

"Cooke's injury was a big break for us because we're at a disadvantage as far as the import matchup is concerned," said Barangay Ginebra coach Allan Caidic, whose import, Rosell Ellis, is six inches shorter than the 6-foot-8 Cooke.

Caidic said the Gin Kings are looking to replace the 6-foot-2 Ellis by bringing in Ace Tustis, a 6-foot-8 bruiser who could match up with the likes of San Miguel Beer's Art Long and Holcomb.

Mark Caguioa also mocked the Hotdogs' defense, drilling in 15 of his 19 points in the second half with a variety of jumpers and fastbreak plays as the Gin Kings finished off their opponents.

The performances of Caguioa, Menk and Ellis spoiled Patrimonio's moment of glory.

"It could had been better if we won the game," said the 37-year-old Patrimonio, who became the third player in PBA history to reach the 15,000-point plateau.

Needing only 11 points to seal the milestone, Patrimonio scored his 12th point of the game by knocking in a triple off a nifty pass by Richard Yee with 47 ticks to go in the third quarter.

The Purefoods skipper moved to third behind PBA greats Mon Fernandez and Abet Guidaben. Patrimonio needs to score 3,000 points more to overtake Fernandez and at least 700 markers to beat Guidaben.

"It will take me two to three more years to overtake Guidaben. But as long as I push myself to the limit and with the help of the team management, I can achieve that goal," said Patrimonio, who is an assist shy of becoming the fifth cager to hit the 5,000-assist mark.

Patrimonio promised to achieve this milestone when the TJ Hotdogs face the Turbochargers in General Santos City on Thursday.

"I'm looking forward to it. I'll dedicate that achievement to my father who lives in nearby Marbel, Cotabato," said Patrimonio.

Scores:

GINEBRA 100—Menk 32, Caguioa 19, Ellis 19, David 13, Adducul 6, Seigle 4, Helterbrand 3, Santos 2, Noble 2, Salvacion 0, Calpito 0.

PUREFOODS 85—Limpot 21, Artadi 12, Patrimonio 12, Simon 8, Evangelista 7, Yap 6, Raymundo 6, Castillo 6, Sotto 5, Yee 2, Johnson 0.

Quarters: 24-19, 52-33, 77-55, 100-85.

Second Game

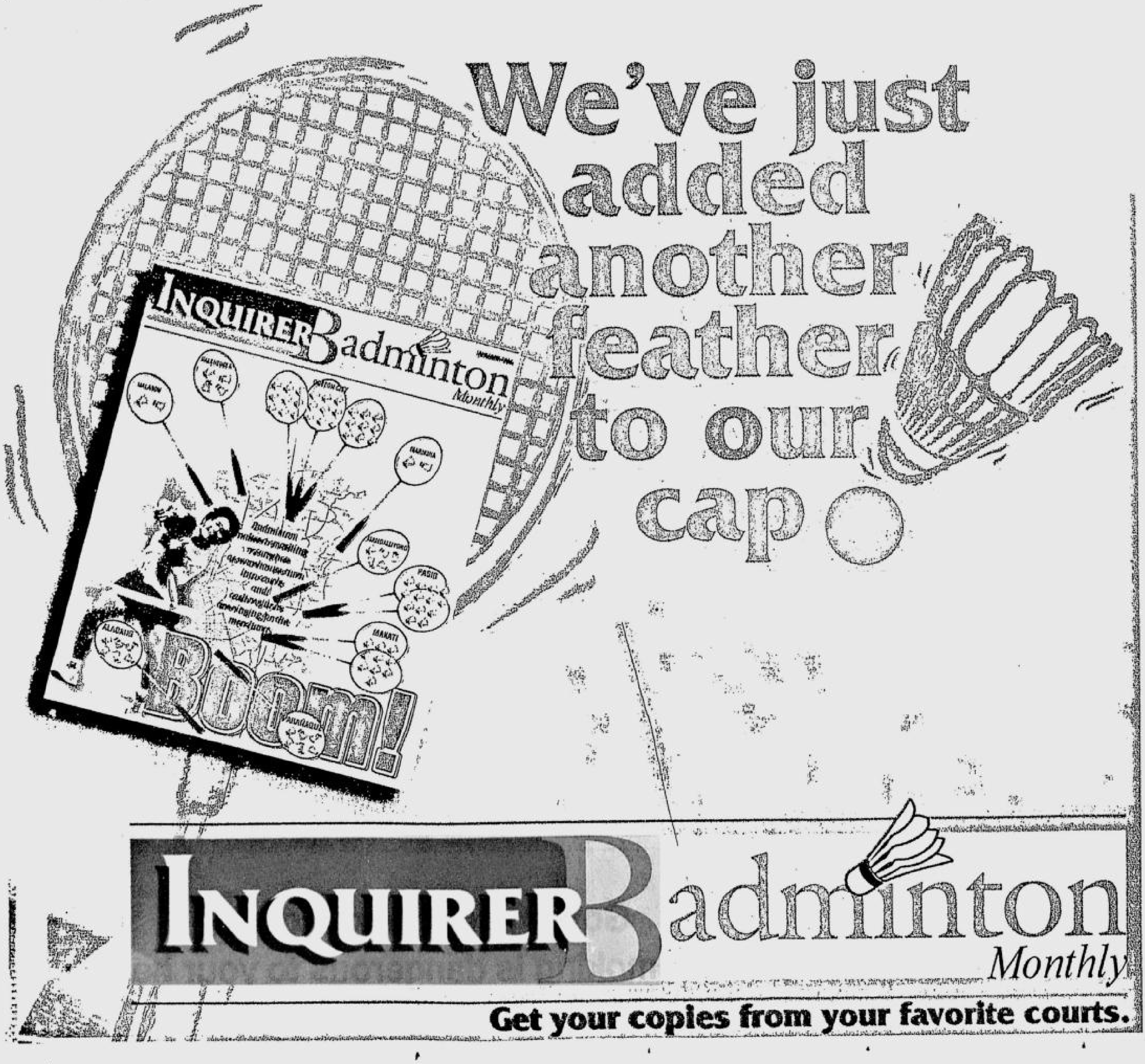
TALK 'N TEXT 98—Taulava 37, Holcomb 20, Miller 10, De Ocampo 10, Alapag 9, Belano 6, Villa 2, Ravena 2, Fran 2, Salangsang 0, Telan 0.

SHELL 88—Ondera 32, Hrabak 14, Calaguio 13, Alvarez 12, Dela Cruz 7, Ferreria 6, Sta. Maria 2, Bacani 2, Tubid 0, Mamaril 0, Jackson 0.

Quarters: 24-21, 44-42, 76-72, 98-88.

GAMES WEDNESDAY *(Philsports)*
4:45 p.m.—Sta. Lucia Realty vs Red Bull
7 p.m.—Coca-Cola vs Alaska

ROSELL Ellis (left) and Eric Menk of Barangay Ginebra harass Rey Evangelista a loose-ball scramble in last night's game. AUGUST DELA CRUZ



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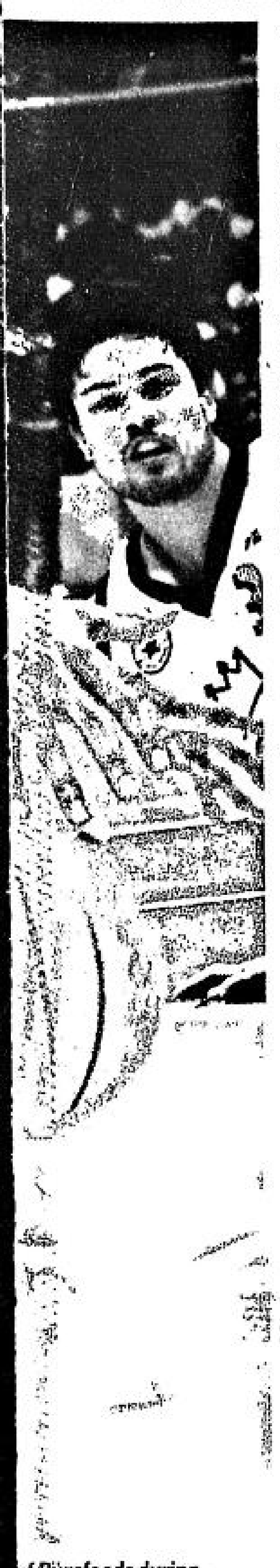

of Purefoods during

BAP congress gives officers fresh mandate

OFFICIALS of the Basketball Association of the Philippines were unanimously given a fresh mandate yesterday when they were reelected during the BAP National Congress at the All Star Café, Adriatico Street, Manila.

The congress, which was attended by regional directors, commissioners, coaches, athletes and representatives of the Basketball Referees Commission (Barecom) also tackled issues affecting the association and its various programs for the year 2004.

"This reflects the unity of the association. We come from different regions but our goal is the same: to continue the uplift of amateur basketball in the country," said BAP president Quinteliano "Tiny" Literal.

"This fresh mandate ensures the continuity of our programs and gives us the confidence to move on and meet new challenges."

Literal reminded the assembly that the BAP remains the only legitimate basketball association as he decried the attempts of other groups to undermine its authority.

"The BAP is the only basketball association recognized by the Fiba (international basketball federation) and we will never allow other groups to wrest that authority from us," he said.

LITERAL

LIM

The congress also unanimously approved the new BAP logo, a multicolored representation of the association's ideals. Incorporated in the logo are the tri-colors of the national flag.

BAP secretary general Graham Lim later presented the BAP's accomplishments in the past year, which was highlighted by the partnership forged between the BAP and the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) in establishing a comprehensive basketball grassroots program.

Executive vice president Christian Tan discussed the ongoing programs of the association, including the "Tryouts ng Bayan," "Tuklas Taas" and the Six Footers Basketball Program.

From Manila, the BAP delegation will proceed to Lucena City for the opening ceremony of the 58th National Students Championship which will be held on March 1-7 at the Quezon Convention Center in Lucena City.

The weeklong event, to be hosted by Gov. Wilfrido Enverga and pitting champion teams from NCR and the country's different regions in both the collegiate and high school levels, is backed by Burlington Industries, Cebuana Lhuillier, YKL Color, Molten, Aceel Outfitters, Healthy Options, Federal Express, Absolute Distilled Water, Philippine Olympic Committee and Philippine Sports Commission.

Out to reassert Manila's supremacy in college play are the Philippine Maritime Institute, University of Perpetual Help of Rizal and University of Manila.

Host Quezon will be represented by Lucena's Enverga University.

Tomacruz, Manuel sail to stirring Hobie win

By Trina Ibarle

Tomacruz and Manuel celebrate their victory in the Hobie class. ROGER MARGALLO

NASUGBU, Batangas—Eric Tomacruz and partner Shelli Manuel sustained their substantial lead in the final leg yesterday to emerge overall winner in the Hobie class of the Punta Fuego-Fortune Island-Terrazas Regatta at the Club Punta Fuego here.

Tacking into the downwind, the pair steered their double-hulled craft to another impressive finish in the Terrazas-Long Beach leg, edging the tandem of Erwin Valdez and Junie Dolina.

Tomacruz, an Internet businessman, and Manuel, a professor at the University of Asia and the Pacific, set up their victory with a runaway win Saturday in the Long Beach-Fortune Island route.

Monchu Garcia and partner Gaye Layda scored a tactical win in the Terrazas de Punta Fuego's triangle race to place second overall in the 12-vessel Hobie class, with the pair of Australian Johannes Zehethofer and Noli Haranata settling for third place honors.

Joe Hagedorn asserted his superiority in the Open class involving single-hulled sailboats as he ran away with the top prize in the two-day event hosted by Club Punta Fuego and sponsored by Casio, I-Bank, Smart, RFM, Rayomarine.com, Starbucks and Tropical Ice.

National athlete Darwin Santos and Andres Soriano pulled off victories in the Streaker and Laser categories, respectively, to place second and third in the Open class.

Tomacruz and Manuel, sailing partners for two years, managed to get more push off the minimal downwind to outrun Valdez and Dolina, who strayed away from the finish buoy and failed to finish.

"They did not pass the buoy, so there was not much pressure on us," said Manuel.

Garcia and Layda went off to an excellent start in the third leg off the Terrazas beach coast to steal the lead from the tandems of Cons Castañeda-Gia Veloso and Pierre Delepianque-Santi Picornell as both pairs jostled for position on a port and starboard tack.

"They were arguing for right of way as the starboard tack should take priority. We just took advantage of the situation and went straight for the finish," said Garcia.

Santos swept all four races in the new class for locally made streaker dinghies, with consistent performers Edmund Umali and Richly Magsanay placing second and third, respectively.

Soriano, CEO of Anscor Corp., took advantage of his lighter body build to sail past Hagedorn and Roman Azansa in the third and fourth Laser races. Hagedorn finished second and Azansa settled for third.

Cordial, Cabatac rule Patakbong Pinoy at State U

SIXTH-GRADER Nichols Cordial soloed it to the finish line to top the boys' division of the Beam-Zest-O Patakbong Pinoy yesterday at the University of the Philippines oval in Diliman, Quezon City.

Another sixth grader, Lorenza Cabatac, grabbed top honors in the girls' division of the 2.2-km race among students from Tandang Sora Elementary School.

The event, organized by the Media Runners and Sports Promotions, was held for the benefit of Tandang Sora's physical education programs.

Jolan Cuizon and Ramil Bersamina placed second and third, respectively, while Krislyn Miranda and Marites Ramos finished in that order behind Cabatac in the girls' race.

The top three placers in both races took home medals and cash prizes from Beam Toothpaste and Zest-O Juice Drinks.

Rounding up the top 10 in the boys' race were Rizalday Montiman, Rudolf David, Arjay Lumangaya, Gentry Fabroa, Arjun Luna, Benzon Salamanca and Rodel de Asis.

Completing the girls' top 10 were Jinky Sandoval, Jayzel Acbang, Roseanne Dellomas, Jerusha Aina Amar, Mary Jane Antonio, Angeline Caones and Monica Artizuela.

"We hope the winners and the others who participated will all be winners when they get older," said Jonel Promotions head Nelson Macaraig.

Dance athletes hone up for 2005 SEA Games

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

BECAUSE dancesport, the newest addition to the 2005 SEA Games calendar, is a rich source of medals in the biennial meet which the country is hosting, the Dancesport Council of the Philippines is leaving nothing to chance. It is conducting local competitions and sending top dance athletes to various international tournaments this year.

On March 20, the council will conduct at the Philsports Arena the DSCP First Quarter Ranking and Competitions-Petron Cup, the opening leg of a series of local dancesport competitions for 2004. International stints awaiting Filipino dance champions are world-class tournaments in Tokyo (March 7 and 14), Bangkok (April 4), Yakustuk, Russia (Children of Asian Games, July 25-29), Hong Kong (Aug. 1), Singapore (Aug. 7-8), Gold Coast, Australia (Aug. 22), Seoul (Sept. 19), Barcelona (Oct. 9), Taipei (Oct. 23-24), Shanghai (Nov. 7) Christchurch, New Zealand (Nov. 20), and Melbourne (Dec. 12).

"It will entail a lot of money to send our teams abroad," said DSCP president Becky Garcia, "but our youthful dance athletes need the international participation mainly because, in terms of international exposure, our local athletes pale in comparison to their foreign rivals who have too much experience, skill and talent."

Still, despite the limited resources, Garcia proudly said, "The Philippines performed extraordinarily well in recent international competitions, stepping away with several gold, silver and bronze medals." For instance, in last December's IDSF (International Dance Sports Federation) Asian Championships in Macau, veteran internationalists Johan Erolle Melencio and Dearlie Gerodias won the silver in the Youth Latin event while Luis Miguel III and Luzviminda Artuz copped the bronze in the amateur Latin category.

Last November at the Philsports Arena, young sensations and PSA awardee Reynato Rener Mercado, 14, and Judith Anne Melencio, 12, won three gold medals in the junior Latin events of the Manila IDSF Open and 7th National Championships-Alaxan FR Cup, sharing stellar billing with another pair of young athletes, Brian Joseph and Karla Ocana, who also won three golds.

And during the Asia-Pacific Championships in 2002, battle-tested Bong Marquez and Belinda Adora won the gold medal in the amateur Latin category while the Rener Mercado-Judith Melencio pair topped the junior Latin competitions. Earlier, John Co and Ednah Ledesma shone brightly in the 78th Blackpool Festival, finishing second in a tough field of 73 dance couples. John and Ednah also emerged champions in the Blackpool Star tournament, outclassing 47 other couples.

In the 15th Singapore Lion City International Championships also held in 2002, John Melencio and Krystel Tadeo captured the gold in the youth Latin event together with Brian and Karla Ocana (youth Standard) and Ednah Ledesma and Brian Calo (Grade A Latin).

"With the all-out support of the DSCP board, we are making enormous strides in the international dance scene," said Ms Garcia, who is also the vice president of the Asian Dancesport Federation and chair of the Philippine Olympic Committee education and culture commission. "We are still a young group when ranged against the other dance organizations that have been there for ages yet our dancers are now ranked among the best."

The DSCP board is composed of lawyer Noel Laman, chair; businessman-sportsman Jun Herrera, lawyer Jo Saliva, bank executive Gloria Alcala, lawyer Andy Fornier and other prominent personalities, including Marvie Yulo, Prof. Naomi Enriquez, Edward Hayco, horseracing figure Tonete Lagdameo, Gen. Sonny Yan, Ruby Co, Emma Nieto, Chona Mercado and Joel Ocsena. Northern Samar Gov. Raul Daza is the honorary chair.

The only dancesport group recognized by the POC, the DSCP was founded in 1996 by Becky and friends. In the same year, it joined the Germany-based International Dance Sport Federation, the ruling body for amateur dance recognized by the International Olympic Committee, and the World Dance and Dance Sport Council, the governing body for professional dance with headquarters in London. This move was chiefly aimed at making Filipino dance athletes competitive in international championships.

"We are now moving toward professionalizing the ballroom dancing industry by hiring foreign coaches and adjudicators to come here," said Ms Garcia. "We have invited these renowned coaches to teach our local dancers the international style to make them globally competitive. We have a lot of good dancers, but sadly, they would rather remain as dance instructors (DI) and earn money."

***

PBA NOTES. A basketball fan from Leyte called, asking when the games of the Fiesta Conference of the ongoing Philippine Basketball Association would be covered live by ABC 5 in his place.—*MRI*

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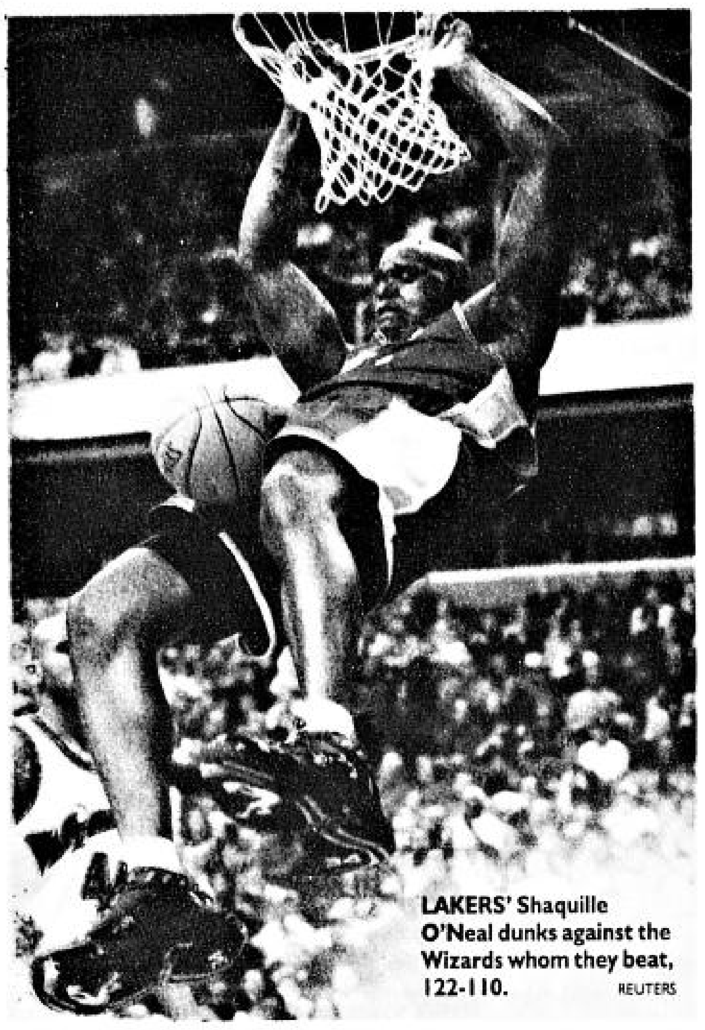
Nets get back on track with victory over Heat



LAKERS' Shaquille O'Neal dunks against the Wizards whom they beat, 122-110. REUTERS

EAST RUTHERFORD, New Jersey—Kenyon Martin had 18 points, 15 rebounds and an incredible late block, and the New Jersey Nets got back on track after losing for the first time under Lawrence Frank with a 92-86 win over the Miami Heat on Saturday.

"To not only block it but to catch it with his chest is amazing," Nets point guard Jason Kidd said.

Richard Jefferson added 25 points and Kidd had four free throws in the final 21.2 seconds to cap a 20-point effort.

The win was the Nets' 15th in 16 games overall, and their 14th in 15 games since Frank replaced Byron Scott as coach of the two-time defending Eastern Conference champions in late January.

The only loss came Wednesday against Minnesota.

Eddie Jones had 21 points to lead Miami, which lost its second straight after winning a season high-tying four games in a row.

Lamar Odom had 10 points in 17 foul-plagued minutes for Miami, which made only seven field goals in the final quarter.

"It was a long game and I had to watch most of it," said Odom, who fouled out.

In Washington, Kobe Bryant's first triple-double of the season helped the Los Angeles Lakers pull away in the fourth quarter for a victory over Washington.

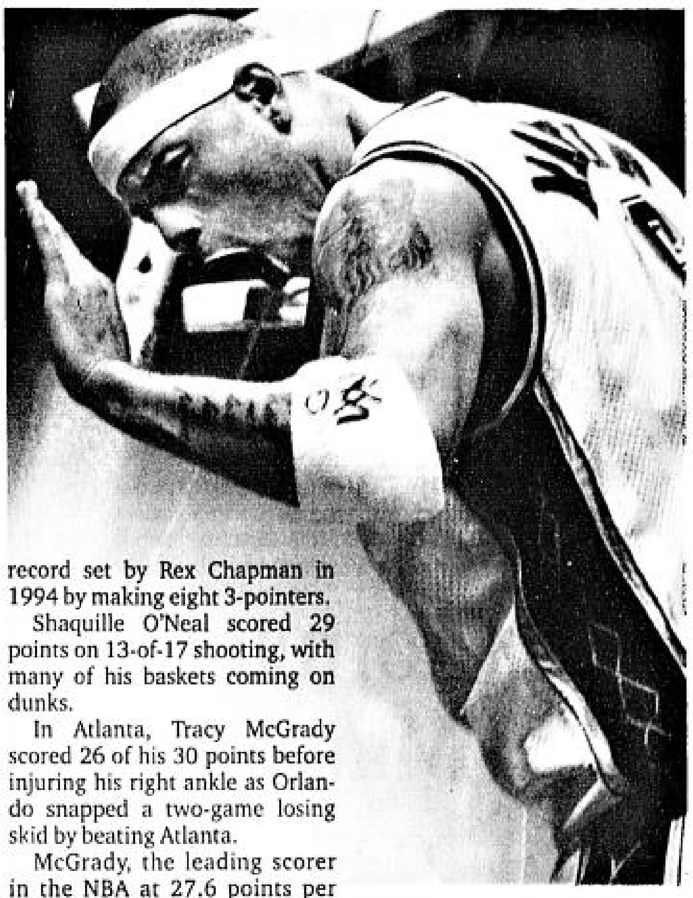
Bryant finished with 25 points, 14 rebounds and 10 assists, and came up big for the Lakers in several key moments.

Gilbert Arenas finished with 35 points for the Wizards on 12-of-23 shooting. He tied a franchise record set by Rex Chapman in 1994 by making eight 3-pointers.

Shaquille O'Neal scored 29 points on 13-of-17 shooting, with many of his baskets coming on dunks.

In Atlanta, Tracy McGrady scored 26 of his 30 points before injuring his right ankle as Orlando snapped a two-game losing skid by beating Atlanta.

McGrady, the leading scorer in the NBA at 27.6 points per game, landed awkwardly on the foot of defender Stephen Jackson after missing a jumper late in the third quarter and immediately began favoring his foot. *AP*



MARTIN acknowledges front row fans' greetings after scoring and being fouled by Miami Heat forward Lamor Odom in the fourth quarter of their NBA game Saturday. REUTERS

Bryant's triple-double powers Lakers win

NEW YORK—Kobe Bryant posted his first triple-double of the season and Shaquille O'Neal added 29 points to carry the Los Angeles Lakers to a 122-110 victory over the host Washington Wizards Saturday.

Bryant collected 25 points, 14 rebounds and 10 assists to help the Lakers win for the sixth time in seven games.

"As long as he keeps playing like that and as long as I keep playing like that, we should be fine," O'Neal told reporters.

Gilbert Arenas notched a game-high 35 points for the Wizards while Kwame Brown had 18 points and 10 rebounds. *AP*

Complete results: New Jersey 92, Miami 86 LA Lakers 122, Washington 110 Orlando 104, Atlanta 99 Indiana 81, Philadelphia 74 San Antonio 117, Denver 92 Memphis 97, New Orleans 92 Dallas 111, Portland 91 Chicago 87, Golden State 81 (OT)

Injured Duncan to miss Spurs' next five matches

SAN ANTONIO, Texas—The San Antonio Spurs placed All-Star forward Tim Duncan on the injured list, which will keep him sidelined for at least a week.

Duncan will miss a minimum of five National Basketball Association games, or through their road contest against the Phoenix Suns on March 6.

Duncan will not be available to play until March 9, when the Spurs visit the Memphis Grizzlies.

A two-time NBA MVP, Duncan left San Antonio's 115-91 loss at Dallas on Thursday with 7:15 left in the third quarter, when he began limping. He may have bruised his left thigh earlier in the game.

Duncan underwent an MRI on Friday that did not reveal any significant change since his last exam, but it was announced he would miss Saturday's game against the Nuggets with what the team termed irritation of his left patellofemoral joint.

Duncan will undergo treatment to strengthen his left quadriceps muscles before he is re-evaluated next week.

The Spurs (38-20), who are opening a four-game homestand, trail Minnesota (43-16) by 4 1/2 games in the Midwest and lead Dallas (37-20) by just one-half game. Sacramento (42-15) is the top seed in the Western Conference.

Playing without their seven-foot star for an extended period likely will cause the Spurs to fall into the fifth spot in the West.

They lead the fifth-seeded Los Angeles Lakers (37-20) by just one-half game.

Duncan ranks sixth in the NBA in points (23.2), third in rebounds (13.0) and fifth in blocks (2.7).

He also was the NBA Finals MVP in 1999 and 2003, leading the Spurs to championships in both seasons. *AFP*

CHAVEZ (left) takes a punch from Morales in the 12th round of their title fight at the MGM Grand Garden Arena Saturday. Morales won the title, his third world championship, by unanimous decision. REUTERS

Morales takes Chavez's diadem

LAS VEGAS, Nevada—Mexico's Erik Morales made a triumph leap into the super featherweight ranks, taking a unanimous decision over Jesus Chavez here Saturday to win the American's World Boxing Council title.

Morales knocked down Chavez twice in the second round and Chavez showed limited use of his right hand after the sixth round in losing his crown to the Mexican by judges' scores of 118-108, 117-109 and 115-112.

"Even though I knocked him down twice in the second round, I knew it wasn't going to be a short fight," Morales said. "Every time I hit him it hurt my hands." Morales, previously a world champion in the featherweight and junior featherweight ranks as well, rose to 46-1 while Chavez fell to 40-3, although he held on valiantly after hurting his right shoulder in the third round.

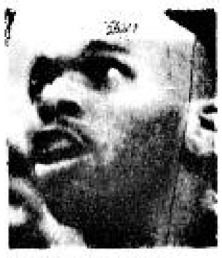
"I threw a right to the body that reinjured my shoulder," Morales said. "I had to get it out and try to pull out the result with one hand."

The fight began at a furious pace with Chavez the aggressor. But Morales answered in the second round by toppling Chavez twice, 30 seconds into the round with an uppercut and a minute later after a quick combination.

"It was a tough fight. I got hurt early. I had to get it back under control," Morales said.

Chavez hung on and opened a cut near Morales' eye in the fourth round. By the sixth round, a matching cut was opened near Chavez's left eye. *AFP*

Stackhouse out for season after meeting with Jordan



STACKHOUSE

WASHINGTON—Washington Wizards Jerry Stackhouse will miss the rest of the National Basketball Association season due a knee injury.

Stackhouse, who missed the first three months of the season while recovering from knee surgery, scored 20 points in Saturday's 122-110 loss to the Los Angeles Lakers.

After meeting with coach Eddie Jordan, Stackhouse decided he would never fully recover without more rest.

"I'm kind of caught at a crossroad," Stackhouse said. "I'm going to sit down and talk to people because right now I'm not healthy and well. I don't feel like I'm being able to play the way I can play and I don't want to go into the offseason rehabbing."

Stackhouse, the Wizards' leading scorer last season, underwent arthroscopic knee surgery on Oct. 21.

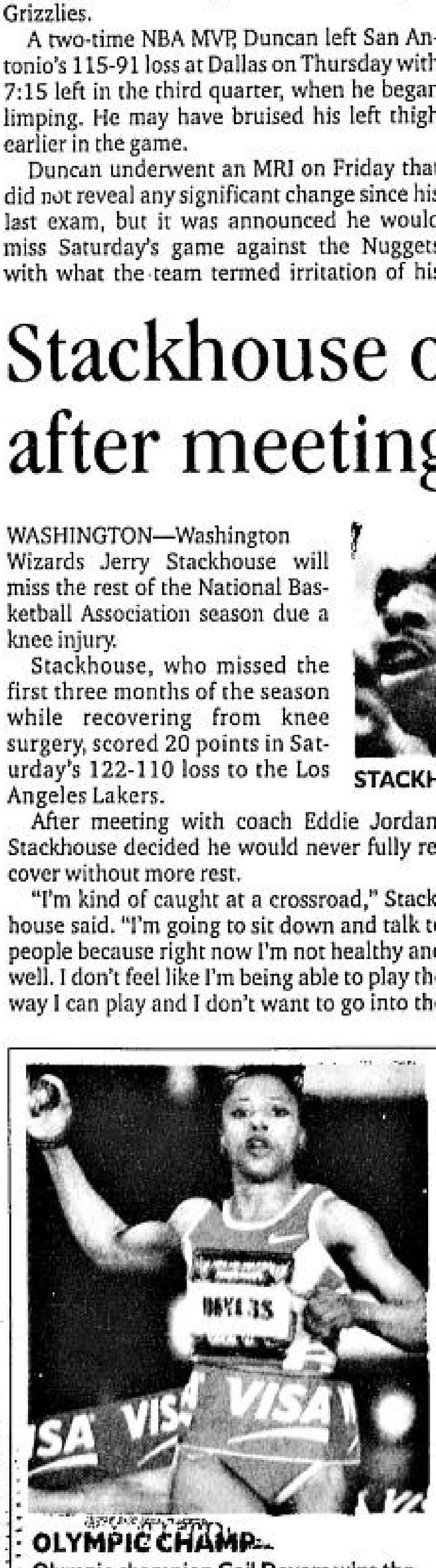
He was diagnosed last fall with chondromalacia, a wearing of the lining in the back of the kneecap.

He returned to the lineup on Feb. 1 and averaged 14.1 points and 3.8 rebounds in 12 games.

The 29-year-old was acquired in September 2002 in a six-player trade with the Detroit Pistons.

He averaged 21.5 points and 4.5 assists in 70 games in his first season with Washington.

The 6-foot-6 Stackhouse made the Eastern Conference All-Star team with the Pistons in 2000 and 2001. *AFP*



OLYMPIC CHAMP

Olympic champion Gail Devers wins the women's 60-meter hurdles in 7.81 seconds at the 2004 USA Indoor Championships for Track and Field Saturday. REUTERS

Peruvian lightweight collapses after losing fight

COCONUT CREEK, Florida—Peruvian-born lightweight Louis Villalta collapsed in his dressing room Saturday night, minutes after losing a 12-round fight against Ricky Quiles of Puerto Rico.

Villalta, 35, was immediately transferred to nearby North Broward Regional Medical Center, where he remained unconscious early Sunday morning.

"When he got out of the ring, he was fine. There was no staggering," said Villalta's trainer, Charles Johnson. "When we got back to the dressing room, he was fine. The only thing he said was his head was hurting him."

The 135-pound 61.2-kilogram Villalta (29-6-1) lost his regional lightweight title by unanimous decision.

Villalta dominated the fight early, knocking Quiles down in the first round. However, in the final two rounds, Quiles hit Villalta—who was never knocked down—with several combinations to the head.

Villalta, who now lives in Hillsborough, New Jersey collapsed just before the night's heavyweight match featuring Ray Mercer, the 1988 Olympic gold medalist, and Steve Pannell. *AP*

Foreman mulls another comeback

LAS VEGAS, Nevada—Former world heavyweight champion George Foreman said goodbye to his television boxing commentary job here Saturday but added that he is "not that far away" from returning to the ring at age 55.

Foreman concluded his contract with boxing telecaster HBO at Mexican Erik Morales' unanimous decision victory over American Jesus Chavez for the World Boxing Council super featherweight title.

With the heavyweight division devoid of top talent since Britain's Lennox Lewis retired, Foreman has been taken seriously when he talks of a comeback for a one-fight world title gala.

"If I get down to 225 pounds, you haven't seen the last of me," Foreman said on Saturday's telecast.

Asked about how far his weight was from that target, Foreman replied, "Not that far away. If I look that heavy, it's the cameras." *AFP*

FOREMAN still raring at 55. AP

WORLD MATCH PLAY

Woods-Love duel for title

WOODS shouts and pumps his fist as he sinks a birdie putt. AP

CARLSBAD, California—Davis Love III birdied the 21st hole to edge out Darren Clarke on Saturday and clinch a final showdown with world number one Tiger Woods at the WGC-World Match Play Championship.

Clarke went two up at the 16th but bogeyed the 17th while his opponent parred. Love then took the contest into extra holes when he birdied the 18th and the Northern Irishman parred.

Defending champion Woods never trailed in his semifinal with Stephen Leaney and put out the Australian, 2 and 1, at La Costa Resort & Spa.

Leaney leveled the match with a par at the ninth but Woods won the next two holes.

The Australian drew level again with a birdie at the 13th before Woods birdied the 16th and 17th to complete the victory.

In the quarterfinals earlier in the day, Woods eliminated Ireland's Padraig Harrington, 2 and 1, while Love defeated Phil Mickelson, one up.

Love said he made a mistake against Clarke when he tried to sink his birdie putt at the 16th but ran the ball eight feet past the hole and failed to make par.

"I was trying to make it and I ran it by," Love told reporters. "I felt like the match was really over.

"Then walking over to 17, I said, 'you can't give up, you never know what will happen.'

"Sure enough, he hit it right and made a bogey. Then I won 18 and it's another little match." Woods said his birdie at the 16th was the key to his victory.

"Sixteen was the hole I needed," he said. "He (Leaney) had the momentum.

"He won 13 and that putt looked like it probably could have gone five, six, seven feet by the hole with no problem, and it goes right in the middle, so he takes all the momentum there away from me." Leaney pushed his tee shot right at the 16th, then knocked his second into a greenside bunker. His sand shot skimmed over the lip of the trap and nestled about a foot away from the hole for a certain par.

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"On top of that, it would give me a little bit of a crutch with two holes to go." The victory took Woods' record in the event to 19 wins and three defeats.

"It was a tough match because Stephen is a wonderful driver of the golf ball.

"I knew he was going to hit just about every fairway. On top of that, he made some great putts today for pars and birdies and basically put a lot of pressure on me." US Ryder Cup teammates Woods and Love will begin the 36-hole final at 0700 local time on Sunday. *Reuters*

Baddeley nears 1st Tour victory

TUCSON, Arizona—Heath Slocum and Aaron Baddeley of Australia on Saturday put themselves in position to win their first PGA Tour titles.

Baddeley fired a brilliant 8-under-par 64 to catch Slocum in the $3 million dollar Tucson event. Slocum fell out of sole possession of the lead when he missed a short par putt at the 18th hole.

Slocum fired a 70 as both players finished with a 54-hole total of 15-under 201.

Mike Heinen, Carlos Franco of Paraguay and Mike Hensby of Australia shared third at 202, with Per-Ulrik Johansson of Sweden, rookie Vaughn Taylor and Bill Glasson at 203.

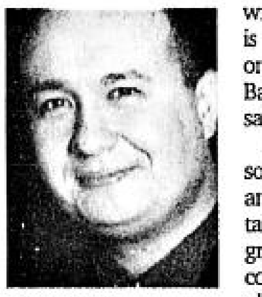
Harrison Frazar and rookie Dan Olsen were another stroke back.

Of those that made the cut, John Daly and Casey Martin were second-to-last at even-par 216. Daly posted a 76 and Martin a 77. Jay Williamson was at 217.

Twenty-five players were within seven shots of the lead, vying for the $540,000 first prize.

Baddeley has held one 54-hole lead before but ended up losing to South Africa's Ernie Els in a playoff at the 2003 Sony Open in Hawaii. *AFP*

'Tryouts ng Bayan' looks to the future



LHUILLIER

THE FUTURE of Philippine basketball.

This is what Philippine basketball team manager Jean Henri Lhuillier has in mind when he launched the Cebuana Lhuillier-backed nationwide basketball 'Tryouts ng Bayan.'

Responding to criticisms thrown at the program, Lhuillier, EVP-GM. of the country's largest pawnshop chain, clarified that the results of the said tryouts, which received favorable response in the Visayas and Mindanao, will be felt in the future rather than on an immediate basis.

"When we were at Vietnam for the SEA Games last year, I was impressed at what the host country told us, saying it is all right with them that we beat them in basketball today. Affter all, what they have undertaken is a real long-term basketball development program of 20 years' scope, and how can we go wrong with that? That is why we embarked on the Tryouts ng Bayan with the BAP," said Lhuillier.

And contrary to some misconceptions and overblown expectations for the program, Danny Francisco, a former national player who is involved with the sport development programs of Cebuana Lhuillier, said the men's team will only be able to get a few players from the tryouts.

"The whole idea is to discover potentials not just for the men's team, but also for the women's team. In the men's side, most of those whom we discover will be referred to the 18 and under and the 20 and under program of the BAP," said Francisco. "The older ones will go to the national training pool for the men's team where we hope to maintain around 25 players and provide them with year-round training."

Transsexual bets under study

ATHENS, Greece—The IOC put off a decision Saturday on allowing transsexuals to compete in the Olympics, saying more time was needed to consider all the medical issues.

The IOC medical commission proposed that athletes who have undergone sex-change operations be eligible for the games after hormone therapy and a two-year waiting period.

But the International Olympic Committee executive board failed to reach consensus and decided to delay any possible action until its next meeting in May.

"We tried to explain what is a difficult medical problem," IOC president Jacques Rogge said. "It was a discussion between people who knew what they were saying and people who did not understand what they were saying." *AP*

Games security assured

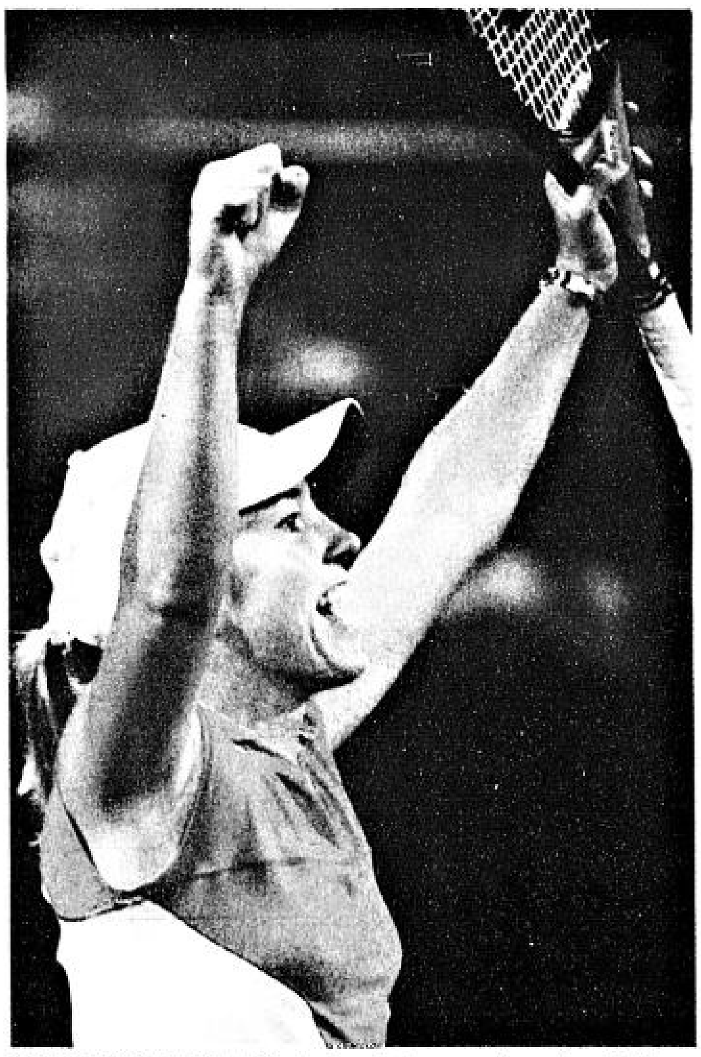
ATHENS—The 2004 Athens Summer Games will be the most secure in history, said IOC president Jacques Rogge here on Saturday.

"The security forces have taken everything, and I mean everything, into consideration," said Rogge.

"We have our own security experts and their assessment is positive. They have told me that there is an unprecedented effort by the Greek government." But he stressed it would be wrong to believe that there would not be an attack of some sort.

"Zero risk? No one can guarantee zero risk," he said. *AFP*

Hardenne wins Dubai Open tilt



HENIN-HARDENNE celebrates her victory over Kuznetsova in the Dubai Open final on Saturday. Henin-Hardenne won, 7-6 (7/3), 6-3. AFP

DUBAI—World number one and defending champion Justine Henin-Hardenne won her third title of the year on Saturday with a 7-6 6-3 victory over Russian teenager Svetlana Kuznetsova in the final of the Dubai Open.

Henin-Hardenne added to her victories in Sydney and at the Australian Open with the win, though it was an awkward match for the Belgian, who was unable to dominate the 85-minute baseline battle at any stage.

"I'm very happy to defend my title, especially because last week I wasn't feeling well and I wasn't sure I could be 100 percent," said the Henin-Hardenne, who won $93,000.

"I knew it was going to be tough because Svetlana played great tennis this week, and I knew I had to fight a lot." Henin-Hardenne took an early lead, breaking for 2-1 and dropping only three points in her first four service games.

She then failed to serve out the set at 5-4, double faulting and making three backhand errors to allow her 18-year-old opponent to level before winning the tiebreak 7-3.

Kuznetsova, who beat former world number one Venus Williams and two other seeds on the way to the final, lacked aggression in the first set and attacked more in the second.

Henin-Hardenne was able to respond, with her returns forcing several errors from Kuznetsova, which led to a service break for a 2-0 lead but the Russian refused to buckle.

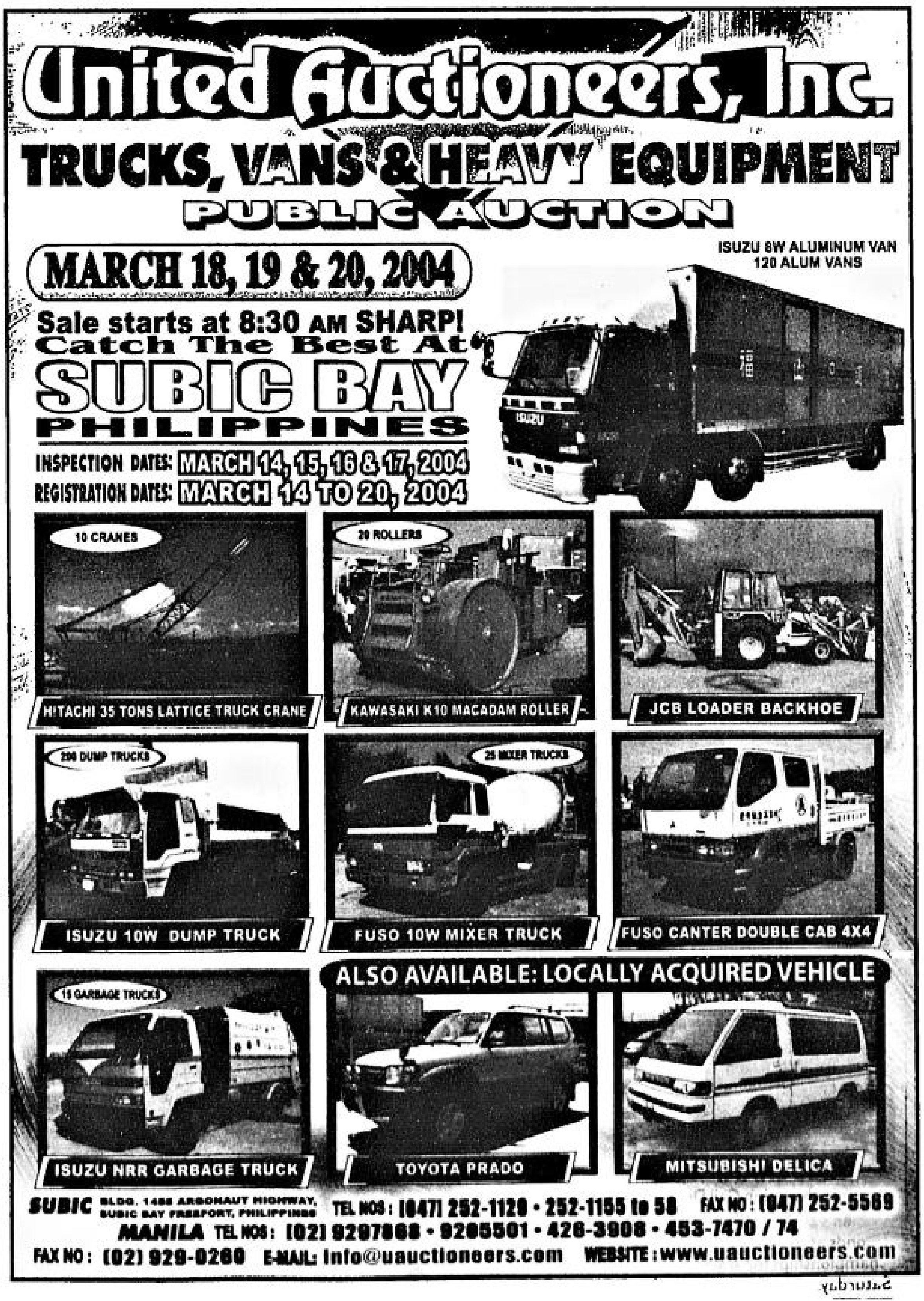
She broke back in the fifth game before a clumsy forehand allowed the Belgian to break again to lead, 5-3, and then serve out for the match.

Kuznetsova said that nerves had affected her performance during the first set.

"It was the final and I was a little bit tight inside," said Kuznetsova. "I wasn't at my best today, and to beat Justine the way she plays now I have to be at the top of my game.

"I was trying to relax and do the things I can do, but she didn't allow me to play the way I wanted to." Kuznetsova admitted that she took a more cautious approach because she was afraid of making errors. *Reuters*

GOLF WINNERS
San Jose, California's Goin' Bananas golf team recently held their awards rites after a four-day tournament at Wack Wack, Midlands, The Country Club and Sta. Elena. Sam Atienza (fifth from left) emerged overall champion while Bernie Sana and team captain Lito Reyes finished second and third, respectively. From left are Luis Cuasay, Bert Francisco, Dino Ronquillo, Ric Medel, Rene Romna, Rico Medina, Rey del Rosario and Bill Pizarro.



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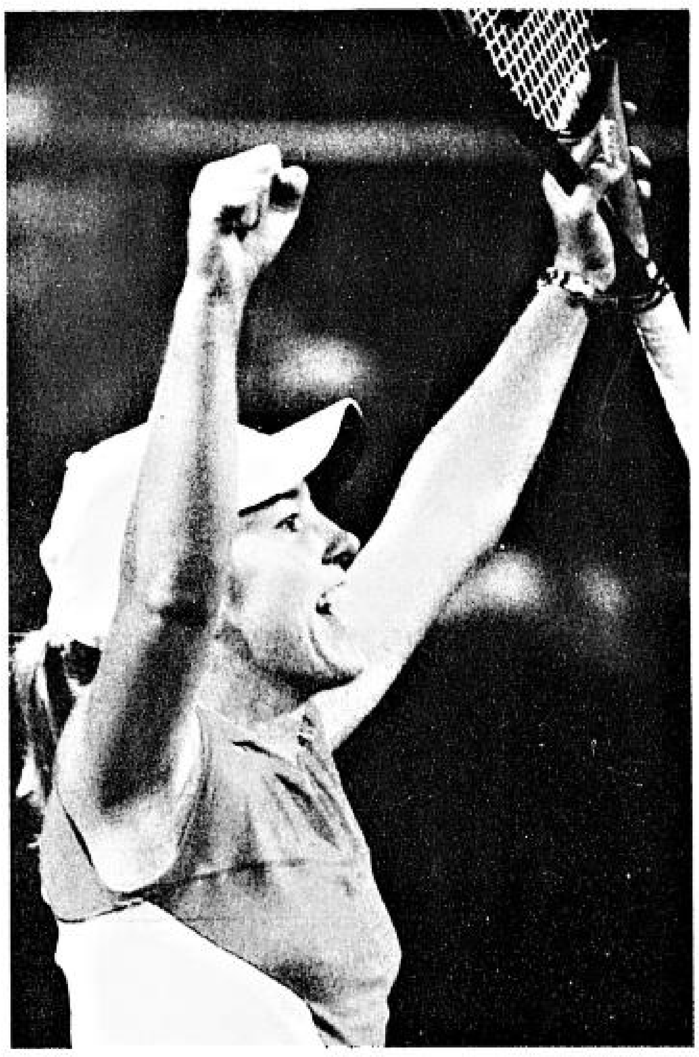

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DUBAI—World number one and defending champion Justine Henin-Hardenne won her third title of the year on Saturday with a 7-6 6-3 victory over Russian teenager Svetlana Kuznetsova in the final of the Dubai Open.

Henin-Hardenne added to her victories in Sydney and at the Australian Open with the win, though it was an awkward match for the Belgian, who was unable to dominate the 85-minute baseline battle at any stage.

"I'm very happy to defend my title, especially because last week I wasn't feeling well and I wasn't sure I could be 100 percent," said the Henin-Hardenne, who won $93,000.

"I knew it was going to be tough because Svetlana played great tennis this week, and I knew I had to fight a lot." Henin-Hardenne took an early lead, breaking for 2-1 and dropping only three points in her first four service games.

She then failed to serve out the set at 5-4, double faulting and making three backhand errors to allow her 18-year-old opponent to level before winning the tiebreak 7-3.

Kuznetsova, who beat former world number one Venus Williams and two other seeds on the way to the final, lacked aggression in the first set and attacked more in the second.

Henin-Hardenne was able to respond, with her returns forcing several errors from Kuznetsova, which led to a service break for a 2-0 lead but the Russian refused to buckle.

She broke back in the fifth game before a clumsy forehand allowed the Belgian to break again to lead, 5-3, and then serve out for the match.

Kuznetsova said that nerves had affected her performance during the first set.

"It was the final and I was a little bit tight inside," said Kuznetsova. "I wasn't at my best today, and to beat Justine the way she plays now I have to be at the top of my game.

"I was trying to relax and do the things I can do, but she didn't allow me to play the way I wanted to." Kuznetsova admitted that she took a more cautious approach because she was afraid of making errors. *Reuters*

'Tryouts ng Bayan' looks to the future

LHUILLIER

THE FUTURE of Philippine basketball.

This is what Philippine basketball team manager Jean Henri Lhuillier has in mind when he launched the Cebuana Lhuillier-backed nationwide basketball 'Tryouts ng Bayan.'

Responding to criticisms thrown at the program, Lhuillier, EVP-GM of the country's largest pawnshop chain, clarified that the results of the said tryouts, which received favorable response in the Visayas and Mindanao, will be felt in the future rather than on an immediate basis.

"When we were at Vietnam for the SEA Games last year, I was impressed at what the host country told us, saying it is all right with them that we beat them in basketball today. After all, what they have undertaken is a real long-term basketball development program of 20 years' scope, and how can we go wrong with that? That is why we embarked on the Tryouts ng Bayan with the BAP," said Lhuillier.

And contrary to some misconceptions and overblown expectations for the program, Danny Francisco, a former national player who is involved with the sport development programs of Cebuana Lhuillier, said the men's team will only be able to get a few players from the tryouts.

"The whole idea is to discover potentials not just for the men's team, but also for the women's team. In the men's side, most of those whom we discover will be referred to the 18 and under and the 20 and under program of the BAP," said Francisco. "The older ones will go to the national training pool for the men's team where we hope to maintain around 25 players and provide them with year-round training."

Transsexual bets under study

ATHENS, Greece—The IOC put off a decision Saturday on allowing transsexuals to compete in the Olympics, saying more time was needed to consider all the medical issues.

The IOC medical commission proposed that athletes who have undergone sex-change operations be eligible for the games after hormone therapy and a two-year waiting period.

But the International Olympic Committee executive board failed to reach consensus and decided to delay any possible action until its next meeting in May.

"We tried to explain what is a difficult medical problem," IOC president Jacques Rogge said. "It was a discussion between people who knew what they were saying and people who did not understand what they were saying." *AP*

Games security assured

ATHENS—The 2004 Athens Summer Games will be the most secure in history, said IOC president Jacques Rogge here on Saturday.

"The security forces have taken everything, and I mean everything, into consideration," said Rogge.

"We have our own security experts and their assessment is positive. They have told me that there is an unprecedented effort by the Greek government." But he stressed it would be wrong to believe that there would not be an attack of some sort.

"Zero risk? No one can guarantee zero risk," he said. *AFP*

GOLF WINNERS

San Jose, California's Goin' Bananas golf team recently held their awards rites after a four-day tournament at Wack Wack, Midlands, The Country Club and Sta. Elena. Sam Atienza (fifth from left) emerged overall champion while Bernie Sana and team captain Lito Reyes finished second and third, respectively. From left are Luis Cuasay, Bert Francisco, Dino Ronquillo, Ric Medel, Rene Romna, Rico Medina, Rey del Rosario and Bill Pizarro.

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SR A/T	891,000.00	178,200.00	61,272	42,183	33,504	23,998	19,665	16,656
GSX A/T	842,000.00	168,400.00	57,731	39,745	31,560	22,613	18,435	15,693
CLX A/T	802,000.00	160,400.00	54,859	37,754	29,090	21,481	17,513	14,907
GL GAS	693,000.00	138,600.00	48,960	32,330	25,606	18,309	15,000	12,766
DLX DSL	685,000.00	137,000.00	48,387	31,932	25,370	18,172	14,815	12,608
DLX DSL (50% DP)	685,000.00	342,500.00	28,542	19,149	15,227	10,907	8,802	7,561

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Risks of policy reversals worry IMF

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE INTERNATIONAL Monetary Fund is worried about risks of reversals in Philippine economic policies if the incumbent president would not get reelected.

Emerging from a principals' meeting with a visiting IMF mission on Friday, Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong said: "The feedback is that they are worried about the political implications (of the May elections) on our fiscal and monetary policies."

Amatong noted that the visiting IMF mission would like to know the degree of risks of economic policy reversals.

"If (President) GMA (Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo) doesn't win, then it's a different government and that's the danger, of course, because the reforms have been started," she said.

However, she said the incumbent economic managers had no way of knowing how the presidential elections in May would go.

"They are concerned about the feasibility and sustainability of the policy," Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin added.

On the legislative reforms that the IMF would like to see—such as the indexation of sin products—Boncodin said: "We told them there is nothing much that will happen between now and the elections."

But the fiscal managers said the IMF team was happy with the government's prudent budget management despite the failure to pass the government budget for 2004.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco, however, noted that the Philippine economic managers assured the visiting IMF mission that not even a change in political leadership could trigger economic policy reversals.

"We told them that's not likely because the liberalization measures that we adopted—like those on tariffs—are already well-entrenched and embedded in certain laws and would not be easy to change," Tetangco said.

The economic managers likewise assured the IMF that they would continue a fiscal consolidation and deficit-reduction program.

Most investors are wary of political uncertainties in the Philippines and prefer the reelection of the incumbent president.

Tetangco said the IMF team was likewise seeking updates on "how monetary policy is being implemented given the political uncertainties and the pessimistic sentiment in the financial markets."

He said allowing the free float of the local currency was the "right stance of monetary policies."

The visiting IMF mission sought additional inputs on the country's economic updates in time for the next IMF board meeting this month.

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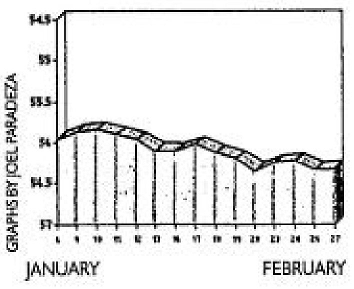

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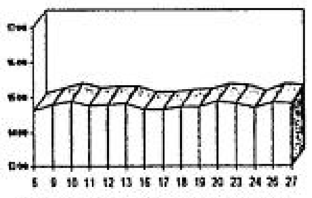
United States	Dollar	0.803794	1.000000	56.2750
Japan	Yen	0.007337	0.009128	0.5137
United Kingdom	Pound	1.496745	1.862100	104.7897
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.103269	0.128477	7.2300
Switzerland	Franc	0.634357	0.789204	44.4125
Canada	Dollar	0.599086	0.745323	41.9431
Singapore	Dollar	0.471960	0.587165	33.0427
Australia	Dollar	0.619494	0.770713	43.3719
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.132193	2.652661	149.2785
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.214357	0.266681	15.0075
Brunei	Dollar	0.470578	0.585446	32.9460
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000095	0.000118	0.0066
Thailand	Baht	0.020453	0.025445	1.4319
UAE	Dirham	0.218863	0.272287	15.3230
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.244100	70.0117
Argentina	Peso	0.275037	0.342173	19.2558
Brazil	Real	0.273678	0.340483	19.1607
Denmark	Kroner	0.134201	0.166959	9.3956
India	Rupee	0.017783	0.022124	1.2450
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.211553	0.263193	14.8112
Mexico	New Peso	0.072709	0.090457	5.0905
New Zealand	Dollar	0.552208	0.687002	38.6610
Norway	Kroner	0.113983	0.141806	7.9801
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014025	0.017449	0.9819
South Africa	Rand	0.121763	0.151485	8.5248
Korea	Won	0.000683	0.000850	0.0478
Sweden	Kroner	0.108355	0.134804	7.5861
Syria	Pound	0.018272	0.022732	1.2792
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024269	0.030193	1.6991
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000420	0.000522	0.0294

Sluggish trading seen

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B6)

STOCK trading may continue to be sluggish this week as investors hold off major investment decisions pending a Supreme Court ruling on a petition seeking to disqualify presidential front-runner Fernando Poe Jr. from the May elections on an issue of citizenship.

Last week, the benchmark Philippine Stock Exchange composite index (Phisix) lost 0.32 percent or 4.84 points to 1,483.18.

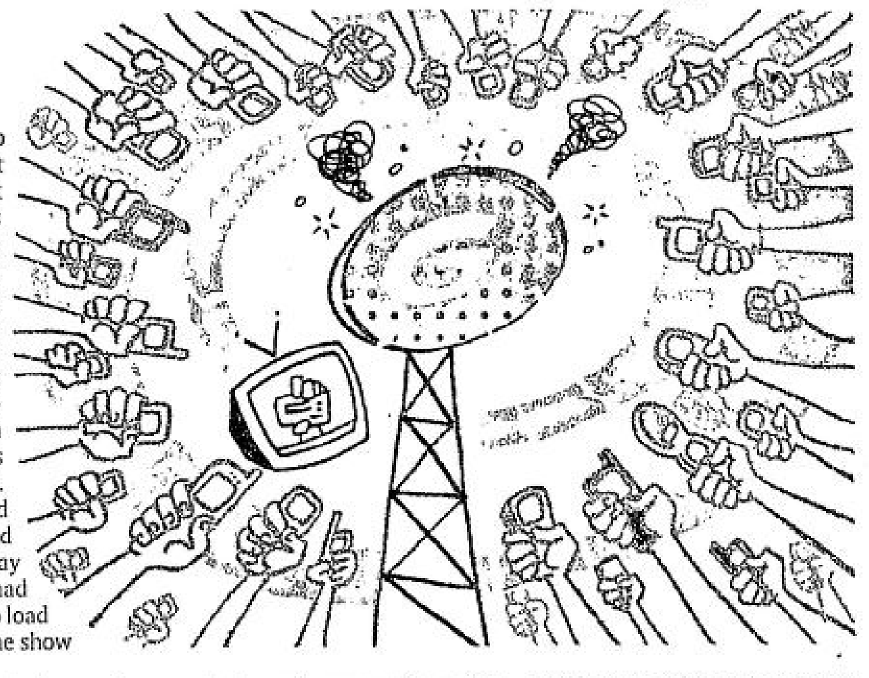
"Investors still adopt the wait-and-see attitude and are probably acting accordingly depending on the Supreme Court decision," said Allan Yu, assistant vice president at Metrobank Trust Banking Group, one of the country's largest fund managers, said.

Jitters over political uncertainties also dragged the peso to a new low of 56.33 against the dollar on Friday.

Also, the military recently confirmed that certain groups were planning another attempt to seize power and were urging active military personnel to join the destabilization plot should Poe be disqualified on grounds of his citizenship.

SLUGGISH/ B6

Globe accuses ABS-CBN of disrupting prepaid service



By Clarissa S. Batino

GLOBE Telecom Inc. has accused ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. of disrupting its prepaid mobile phone service by clogging the 223 reload line when its noontime show gave away limited prepaid cards as part of a promotional gimmick.

Globe asked the National Telecommunications Commission last week to issue a cease-and-desist order against the promo called Libre Load featured in "Masayang Tanghali Bayan."

Globe told the NTC that it did not authorize the noontime show to use its prepaid cards as part of a promo.

But a cease-and-desist order is no longer necessary. ABS-CBN has pulled out Globe call cards from the promo after the telecom regulator called the officials from both companies to a meeting last Thursday.

"ABS-CBN had agreed to pull out Globe prepaid cards from the noontime show's promo. After that meeting, ABS-CBN no longer included Globe prepaid cards," said NTC director Edgardo Cabarios.

The noontime show offers for free one or two P500 free credit loads of different network providers to its viewers. The show hosts would announce the call card numbers and the PIN code and the first to get through the network and key in the numbers would get the load.

A Globe prepaid subscriber attested that from Monday to Saturday, it had been so difficult to load while the noontime show was airing.

The Ayala-owned telecom firm also asked the Lopez-controlled broadcasting network to stop using Globe prepaid cards in its promo. Other mobile phone firms have not complained.

"The promotion has resulted in an abuse of the prepaid top-up facility of Globe by millions of subscribers all competing to load a single reload card. Your disregard for the public welfare by failing to consider the effect of your actions on the broader consuming public is appalling," said the phone company in a letter to ABS-CBN.

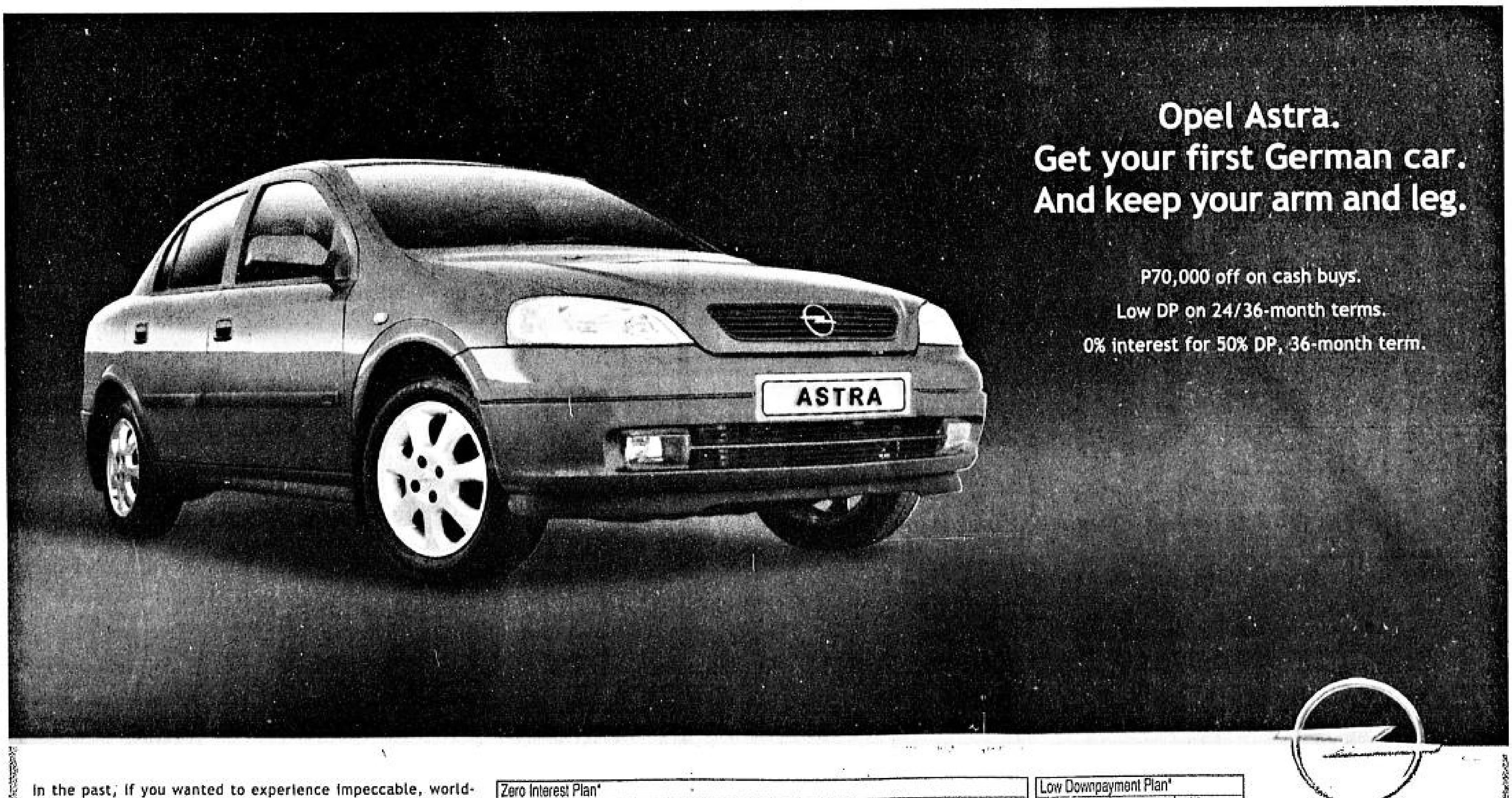
Globe told the network giant that it intended "to take all available legal remedies to seek redress" from the company and the executives responsible for the damage.

Globe has 8.9 million subscribers as of end-2003. Of this, 6.67 million are prepaid customers.

Had the noontime show not pulled out the Globe prepaid cards from the promo, the NTC would have issued a cease and desist order against MTB. The regulator's legal department had recommended the issuance of such an order to NTC Chair Ronald Solis.

NTC legal department director Abigail Santillan said in her letter to Solis that Globe's assigned 223 access code "was being utilized for a purpose for which it was not

GLOBE/ B6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BSP plans tighter rules on banks' investments

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas plans to slap loss provisioning on banks' investments in bonds and other debt instruments (IBODI) if it were proven that these were being used to speculate against the peso.

BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the institution might require banks to mark-to-market their IBODI if it could be established that these were being used to generate liquidity for dollar hoarding.

He said banks' IBODI were currently spared from the mark-to-market requirement as a concession to banks.

BSP Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. explained that in other countries, even IBODIs were required to be marked-to-market. In the Philippines, however, only trading account securities (TAS) are subjected to such requirement.

IBODI, by definition, refers to debt securities where the financial institution has the intention and ability to hold these securities to maturity. Such investments are measured at amortized cost where any realized gains or losses shall be included in reported current income.

On the other hand, TAS are debt and equity securities purchased and held principally with the intention of selling them in the near term. TAS equity securities are applicable only to expanded commercial banks and to non-bank financial institutions with quasi-banking functions.

The BSP said TAS must have readily determinable fair market values and by their very nature require daily mark-to-market where unrealized and realized gains and losses are recognized and booked against "trading gains or loss" account.

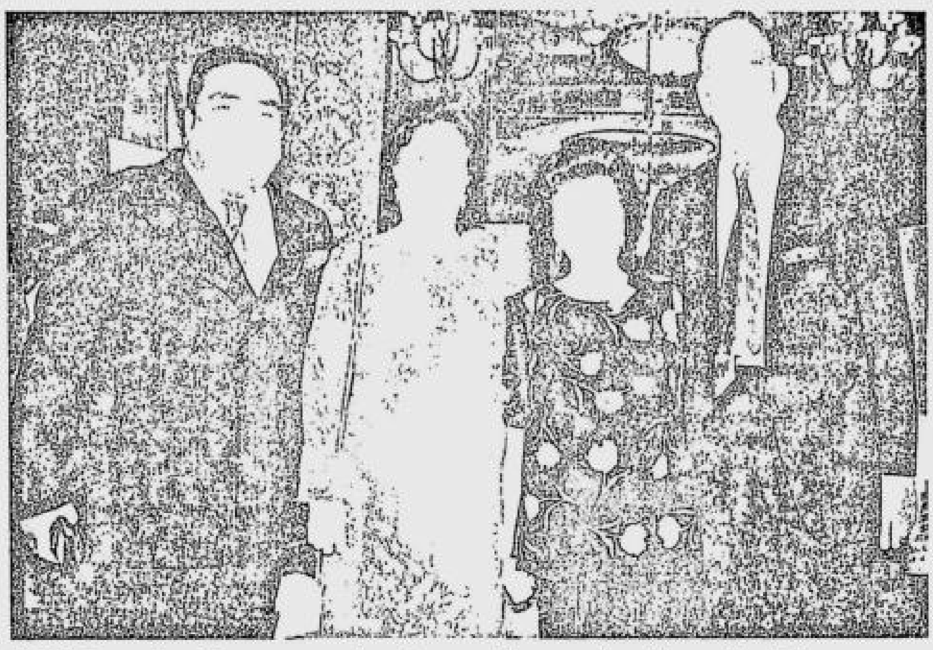
"We'll see if there are violators. If there are abuses then we'll require them to book IBODI with marking-to-market but only the losses can be recognized, not the gains," added BSP Deputy Governor Alberto Reyes.

Under existing accounting standards, Reyes said it was not conservative to book paper gains from IBODI.

The BSP has launched a crackdown on banks' trading of bonds and other debt instruments following the peso's fall to historic lows. The institution deployed starting last week examiners to check on banks' compliance with bond trading regulations, to make sure that the rules were not being circumvented to raise funds for dollar-hoarding.

Under the BSP's existing circular 161, banks' IBODI should not exceed 50 percent of adjusted net worth plus 40 percent of total deposit liabilities.

BSP officials said it was possible that if banks were over-engaging in bond trading, they may be messing up with the IBODI and TAS accounts to raise liquidity to finance their dollar positions.



U-BIX Corp., the office systems and services provider recently celebrated its 30th anniversary. Started in 1974, U-Bix has now become the leader in copier market, with its eight subsidiary companies and two restaurants with a microbrewery and vocational school. It also carries eight brand names. Shown in photo are U-Bix founders (from left): Edilberto Bravo, Felina Bravo, Florencia Belo and Enrique Belo.

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COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

Expressway shakeup

CASH-STRAPPED Crown Equities, the listed venture company controlled by former Equitable PCIBank CEO George Go, has agreed to give up the Alabang viaduct rehabilitation project as well as the extension of the South Luzon Expressway up to the so-called STAR Expressway in Batangas.

Crown Equities has signed a memorandum of understanding with a Filipino-led engineering group with Asian and European financing and technical backing, a deal that would ultimately cede 90-percent control of the 36-kilometer project.

It remains to be seen if Hopewell of Hong Kong, the original project proponent before Crown Equities bought majority control during the speculative Erap years, would continue to hang on to its remaining 10-percent equity or join the sale.

Based on the initial disclosure, the acquiring consortium is being led by Northeast Development and Acquisitions Corp., a local firm that, strangely, could not be found from among the computerized list of companies with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Northeast, along with DM Consunji and Universal Rightfield, acquired majority interest in Celebrity Sports Plaza in Quezon City shortly before the Asian currency crisis sank Universal Rightfield and nearly crippled DM Consunji.

In this expressway venture, Northeast reportedly partnered the First United Constructors Corp., whose last major project, completed in July 1997, was the rehabilitation of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport drainage system.

According to the grapevine, the Northeast consortium is being represented in the negotiations by ex-stock exchange lawyer Ruben Almadro and Cory-era ambassador Domingo Lee.

Based on the disclosure by Crown Equities, the Northeast consortium would first acquire 60 percent of the expressway venture, with an option to buy another 30 percent after six months.

The acquisition price has yet to be disclosed, although the Crown Equities statement referred to the planned transfer of 150.09 million shares with a "book value of P0.87/share."

Girlish disclosure

MA. AMELITA "Girlie" Villarosa, who is seeking to win back her congressional seat in Occidental Mindoro, apparently owes Banco Filipino vice chair Albert "Bobby" Aguirre so much that she would not mind her professional reputation being tarred even in the US federal court records.

Despite her initial reluctance, Villarosa flew to Seattle and testified last week in the foreclosure case filed by Aguirre, her long-time boss, against Aguirre's younger sister Nanette.

According to the grapevine, Villarosa, on the witness stand at the Seattle District Court, expressed surprise when Nanette's US lawyer read the Philippine Supreme Court decision upholding the unseating of Villarosa by the Commission on Elections as a result of a 1998 electoral protest.

Written by no less than Chief Justice Hilario Davide, the en banc decision painted Villarosa in quite unflattering terms. Its introduction in the Seattle hearings was apparently meant to impeach her credibility before the jury.

The Seattle trial is expected to end this week.

Asian inhospitality

THE ASIAN Hospital could be in deep trouble if Raul Roco gets to Malacañang.

The Roco law firm has written both the immigration bureau and the labor department seeking to cancel the work permit of Asian Hospital CEO Bernard George Koval.

The Roco law firm represents the hospital workers declared redundant by, not surprisingly, Koval.

A spokesperson for Asian Hospital chair Jorge Garcia decried the deportation moves and the continuing press leaks, saying they were meant to derail ongoing negotiations with local and foreign investors looking to buy into the world-class hospital.

Among those that have reportedly expressed interest in acquiring the Alabang medical facility is the Metrobank Group.

Heard through the grapevine

THE DBP sale of the Pines Hotel property, where SM Baguio now stands, has been declared fraught with illegal shortcuts by the Makati Regional Trial Court.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

MRT group readies $300-M bond offering

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

A CONSORTIUM that leads the Metro Rail Transit project aims to tap fresh funding from the debt market through a secondary public offering of at least $300 million worth of bonds.

Should it secure an upgrade on the credit rating of its bonds, the MRT consortium plans to list these on the Luxembourg Stock Exchange to attract European investors, Fil-Estate Corp. president Robert John Sobrepeña said.

Sobrepeña said the consortium was seeking permission from the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to sell the bonds—or a form of asset backed securities—to the public on a secondary placement once the ratings have been finalized.

The MRT consortium is seeking to improve its credit rating to Aaa from the Aa it secured earlier from the Philippine Ratings Services Corp.

The PRS Aa is the second highest possible rating under PhilRatings' long-term rating scale, which reflects the group's strong capability to pay off its debts.

"Based on government's performance now with the MRT, we feel it is a good time to list it on the international as well as local markets," Sobrepeña said.

Proceeds of the bond offering, which officials hope may reach $500 million based on current value, will go to the original bondholders which are consortium members Anglo Philippine Holdings Corp. and Fil-Estate Corp. Some of the bondholders are also financial institutions and the College Assurance Plan through its trustee bank.

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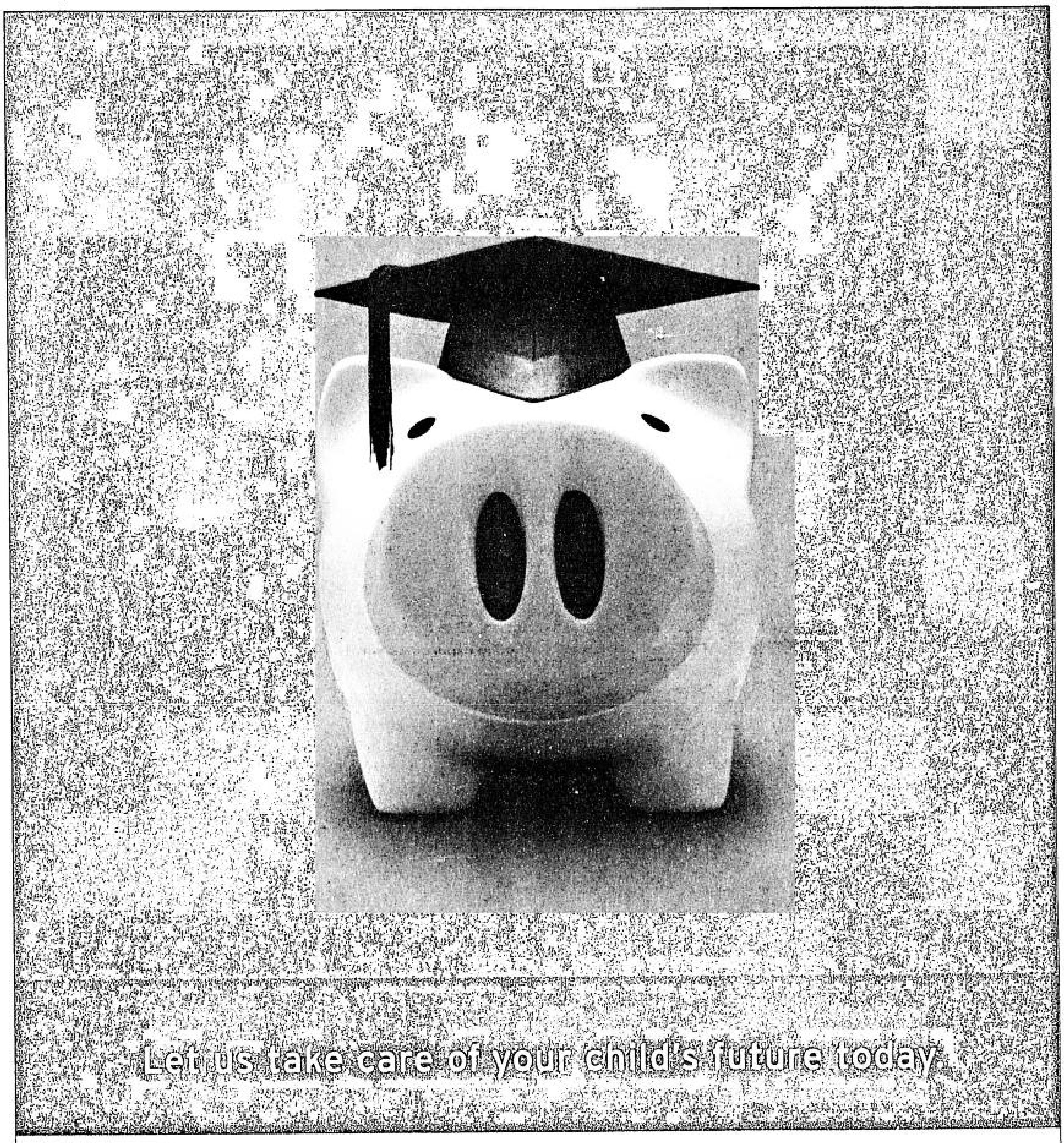

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RP awaits Japan agency's decision on power study

By Abigail L. Ho

THE JAPAN Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) is expected to decide by mid-March whether or not it will fund a study on how to fast-track the completion of the $354-million Leyte-Mindanao interconnection project to 2008 instead of the original schedule of 2011.

In an interview Friday, National Transmission Corp. (Transco) president and chief executive Alan Ortiz said the state firm would get either a yes or a no from JBIC in the next two weeks.

"JBIC is still studying it, but they're nearing a decision. By the second week of March, they'll be giving us an indication of whether or not they'll do it," he told reporters.

The Transco is commissioning the study so it can find ways to accelerate the completion of the Leyte-Mindanao link-up by at least three years.

The JBIC was the logical first choice to fund the study as most of Transco's transmission augmentation projects were JBIC-backed.

Should the JBIC give a negative response to Transco's request for funding, Ortiz said the state firm could also approach other potential funders like the Japan External Trade Organization (Jetro) and the Japan Export-Import Bank (Jexim).

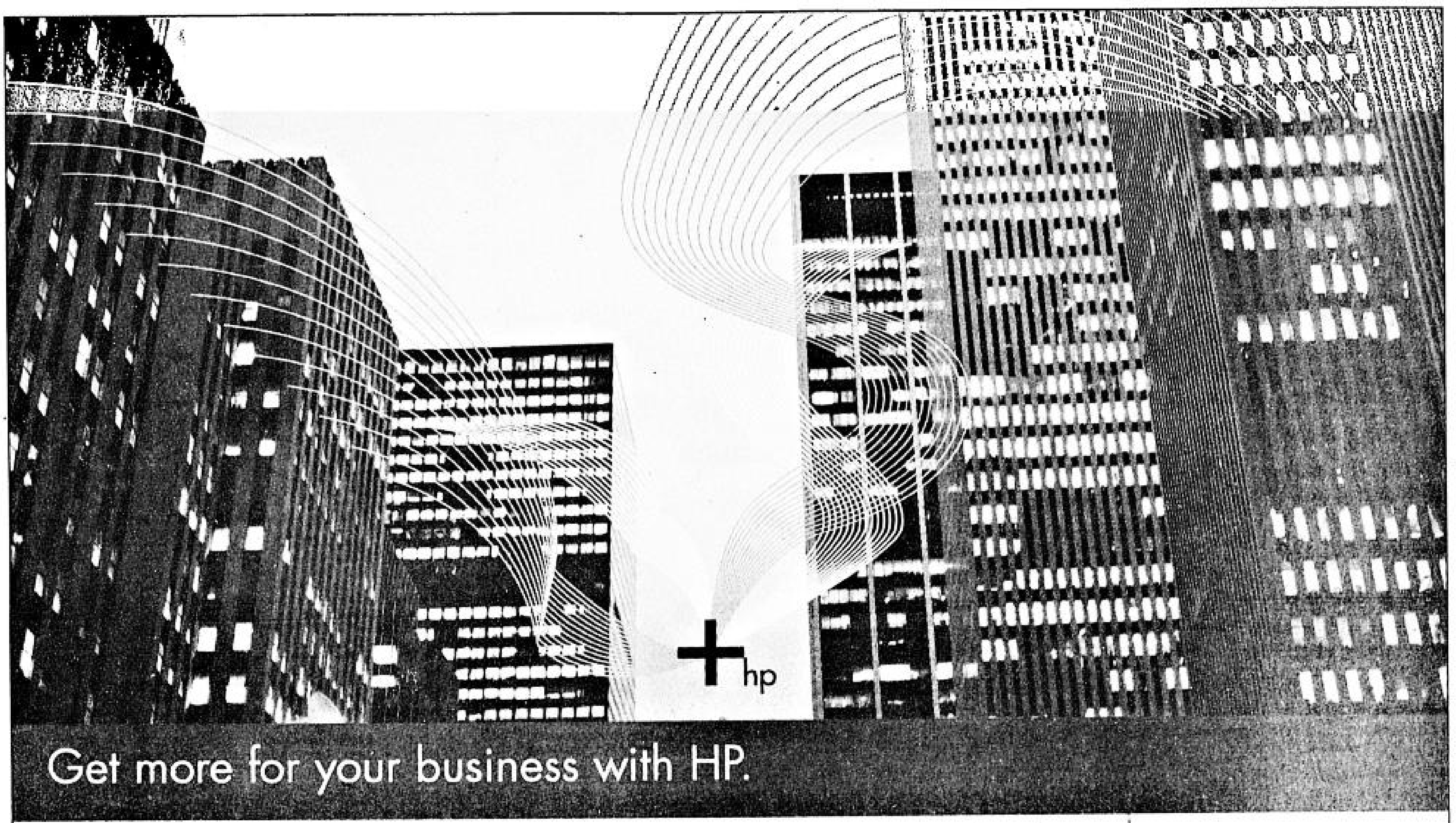
"Both of them are capable of providing the financial muscle to conduct a study. But JBIC is already first in line, so we'll just await their decision and go from there," he said.

The Leyte-Mindanao link-up is the last stage of the interconnection of major power grids in the country. It is seen to realize the government's plan to have the Unified Power Grid of the Philippines in place.

Upon completion either by 2008 or 2011, the connection of Leyte and Mindanao will make the country's island grids an integrated electricity network.

The project is included in Transco's long-term plans under the Mindanao Transmission Augmentation Program or Project: Minta.

In an earlier interview, Ortiz said bidding for the Leyte-Mindanao project should take place within the second half of 2004, a year ahead of earlier projections.



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Singapore firm bags $6-M energy deal

By Abigail L. Ho

NATIONAL Power Corp. recently awarded a $6-million generation set lease contract to Singaporean firm GE Energy Rentals.

The new contract entailed the lease of a 25-megawatt Napocor generator set servicing Oriental Mindoro for a period of one year starting April.

Under the lease agreement, the Singapore-based firm should have the first 15 MW of the project ready for commercial operation by April 8, with the balance ready for deployment by April 18.

Activating the 25-MW generator set would help boost Oriental Mindoro's energy reserves, Napocor said in a statement.

Right now, Oriental Mindoro has an installed capacity of 52.7 MW of electricity, while peak demand stands at 26.45 MW. Of the province's installed capacity, however, only 36.75 MW is deemed dependable.

Napocor said firing up this generation set would help ensure that the province had more energy to draw, particularly in times of peak demand.

Prior to the lease agreement, GE Energy Rentals had already bagged another contract. The first such contract that Napocor awarded to it was for the $3.4-million rental of a 15-MW modular-type diesel generator set for the Irawan substation in Puerto Princesa, Palawan.

The 25-MW generator set under the recently awarded contract will be set up at the Calapan diesel power plant in Calapan, Oriental Mindoro.

GE Energy Rentals, a unit under GE Energy, was established in 1999 to address the rising demand for temporary distributed power in the commercial and industrial as well as in the oil and gas markets.

Debt primer

No Free Lunch

Cielito F. Habito

FEW economic issues can arouse as much emotion as the debt issue, and with good reason: the cost of servicing government debt has again risen to a third of the government budget, after having been brought down to less than one-sixth in 1997. This deprives our people of so much in vital social and economic services every year. The debt incurred for the infamous Bataan nuclear power plant, for which we are now reportedly paying more than $200,000 a day, is the single biggest piece of the debt, and for which the country benefits nothing. The recent downgrades we received from the international credit ratings agencies were largely motivated by the perception that our debt burden is approaching unsustainable levels. Is it?

Definitions and statistics

Talk about the debt often gets confused in terms of its categories and components. Debt is either owed to foreign or domestic lenders, and is incurred either by the government (both the national government and government-owned corporations) or by the private sector. Then there is debt stock or the total outstanding debt, as against debt service, which is what needs to be paid regularly (e.g. every year) for interest and amortization of the principal. When spouting out the numbers, we have to be clear what we are talking about.

In terms of borrower, the Philippine government reported a total debt stock of P3.36 trillion as of end-2003. This is equivalent to about 70 percent of our gross national product or GNP. A little less than half or P1.65 trillion ($29.7 billion) is owed to foreigners, while P1.7 trillion is owed domestically.

In 2003, the government paid P231 billion for interest on outstanding debts, representing about 28.4 percent of the government budget. This year, interest payments will go up to P272 billion or 31.4 percent of the government budget. Payments on principal this year will be P271 billion, up from last year's P195 billion.

Contingent debts

But that is not all of the story. We have not yet counted contingent liabilities, or those debts which the government has committed to pay if the entities that incurred them, usually government corporations, are not able to do so. This comes about as a result of government guarantees on loans incurred by the corporation, like borrowings by National Power Corp. or Napocor. It can also come from buyout commitments for service facilities built by the private sector under the Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) scheme or its variants.

A prime example is the electric power that the government through Napocor has committed to buy at fixed amounts and fixed rates from the privately owned independent power producers (IPPs), whether or not the power is actually used or generated. Another example is the lease being paid to the builder-operator of the Edsa MRT line, which was based on certain expected earnings from the facility that had in past years not been realized due to lower-than-projected passenger traffic, among other things. All together, these contingent debts add up to another P708.5 billion as of last count, and many are now turning into actual debts of the government due to financial difficulties of the entities that incurred them.

Contingent liabilities have grown more than seven-fold since 1990, when they amounted to only P100 billion. The growth in the 1990s came with all the BOT projects wherein the government was forced to take on a greater part of the risks. Now we know better.

Foreign debt and reserves

External debt or total debt owed by both the government and the private sector to foreigners was reported by the Bangko Sentral at $56 billion as of the third quarter of 2003. Servicing this debt takes up 17.6 percent or about one-sixth of our country's total export earnings.

The bulk of these foreign debts are medium to long-term loans with an average maturity of 16-17 years. Only about one-tenth or $6 billion are in short-term loans. Meanwhile, we have foreign exchange reserves equivalent to a comfortable 2.5 times this amount, at about $16.5 billion. This is also equivalent to 4.5 months' worth of import requirements, again a relatively comfortable ratio. In contrast, Thailand had insufficient foreign exchange reserves to fund its short-term foreign debts in 1997, which precipitated the Asian financial crisis. And Argentina had less than a month's worth imports in its reserves when it began slipping into its crisis in 1998 that blew up four years later.

Managing the debt

So how should we manage the debt and avoid an Argentina scenario? Certainly, the government should avoid having the debt burden get worse than it already is. This means reducing the deficit and balancing the budget as soon as possible. As for the existing debt, a unilateral action such as repudiation or a moratorium can only be disastrous, as that would shut us out of any further borrowing. But we should certainly negotiate to the utmost to have our institutional debt stretched out more, swapped for social development projects, or reduced outright. Unfortunately, the better our economy gets, the harder it gets to do this. But there is no other way.

Comments welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu

Gov't approves incentives to boost use of natural gas

By Abigail L. Ho

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo signed last Feb. 24 an order to encourage the use of natural gas in the public transport sector by granting various incentives to industry players that will use the indigenous fuel.

EO 290, which implements the Natural Gas Vehicle Program for Public Transport (NGVPPT), aims to boost government efforts in achieving cleaner air as well as developing the natural gas industry.

The NGVPPT, through the new EO, is seen to help spur growth in the natural gas industry by creating markets for it in the public transport sector. It is also expected to improve energy supply security through the use of alternative fuel sources.

Public transport operators and potential investors in natural gas refilling stations that will participate in the program will be entitled to various perks, including:

- income tax holidays for pioneering projects that will qualify under the Board of Investments' Investments Priorities Plan;
- certificates of compliance with emission standards from the Land Transportation Office;
- preferential and exclusive franchises for natural gas-powered vehicles from the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board for newly opened routes;
- faster issuance of environmental compliance certificates from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources for natural gas vehicle (NGV) facilities and refueling stations;
- affordable financing packages from government financial institutions like the Development Bank of the Philippines;
- manpower development and capacity building through various training and technology transfer programs, and
- competitive compressed natural gas (CNG) prices; closely comparable with those of diesel.

An earlier issuance, EO 164, handed down at the start of 2003, provided lower import duties on NGVs, NGV engines, and other NGV-related facilities and equipment, including spare parts and other components. Importation taxes slapped on these items were reduced to only one percent.

Ms Macapagal likewise ordered the Department of Science and Technology to develop and promote locally made NGV conversion kits, parts and components to reduce dependence on imported products.

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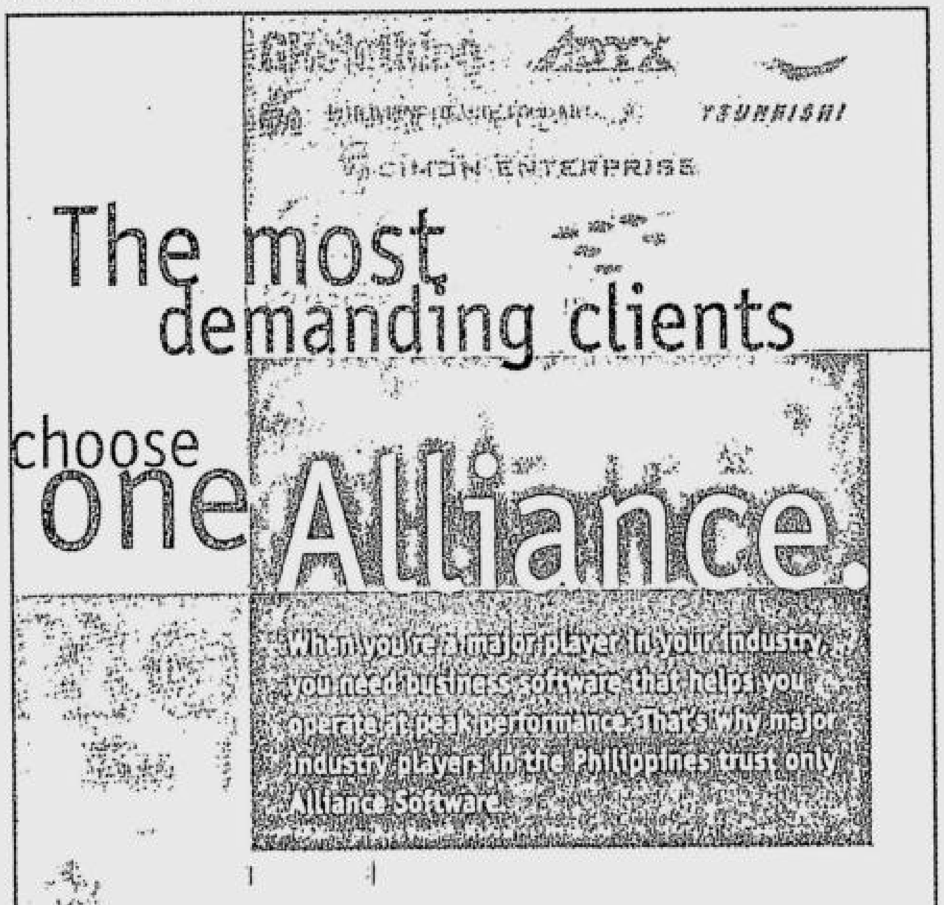

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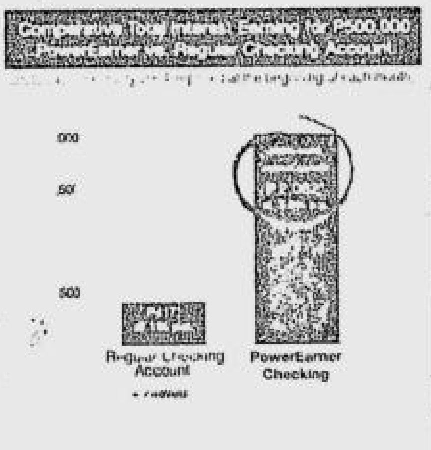
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Manila Yacht Club	550,000	-
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Metropolitan Club	110,000	70,000
Mimosa C3	350,000	-
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Mt Malarayat Ind./Corp.*	300,000*	-
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Punta Fuego	-	Pls Call
Riviera Golf A/B*	120,000	100,000*
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Manila Polo	2,100,000	2,300,000
Makati Sports Club "A"	-	230,00
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Punta Fuego	400,000	pls. call
Orchard "A"	140,000	-
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Riviera "B"	100,000	110,000
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Rockwell Club	280,000	325,000
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Sherwoods "B"	100,000	-
Tagaytay Highlands	pls. call	-
Tagaytay Midlands	650,000	-
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Baguio Country Club	600,000	700,000
Calatagan Golf Club "A"	-	80,000
Camp John Hay	-	250,000
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Canyonwoods	-	150,000
Capitol Hills	120,000	150,000
Cebu Country Club	1,100,000	Please Call
Celebrity Sports Club	150,000	170,000
Club Filipino	100,000	170,000
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Eagleridge "B"	-	320,000
Eagleridge "C"	-	380,000
Forest Hills "A"	-	180,000
Forest Hills "B"	-	190,000
Forest Hills "C"	-	250,000
Makati Sports Club "A"	180,000	200,000
Makati Sports Club "B"	-	250,000
Manila Golf (Corporate)	10,800,000	-
Manila Golf (Individual)	9,500,000	10,400,000
Manila Polo	2,200,000	2,300,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	350,000	430,000
Manila Southwoods "B"	500,000	600,000
Manila Yacht Club	-	330,000
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Mimosa (Individual)	-	Please Call
Mimosa (Corporate)	250,000	275,000
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Mt. Malarayat Gold "C"	-	350,000
Orchard Golf Club "C"	-	250,000
Quezon City Sports Club	-	200,000
Sherwood Hills "A"	-	70,000
Sherwood Hills "C"	-	180,000
Rockwell	280,000	380,000
Spa & Lodge	520,000	600,000
Sta. Elena "A"	1,150,000	1,500,000
Sta. Elena "B"	1,400,000	-
Subic Bay Yacht (Corporate)	150,000	180,000
Subic Bay Yacht (Individual)	-	120,000
Tagaytay Country Club	300,000	340,000
Tagaytay Highlands	750,000	850,000
Tagaytay Midlands	650,000	730,000
Valle Verde (Individual)	100,000	140,000
Valle Verde (Corporate)	-	250,000
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JBIC OKs funding for Transco project

By Abigail L. Ho

THE JAPAN Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) has approved "in principle" an $80-million funding for the National Transmission Corp.'s (Transco) Cebu-Negros-Panay interconnection project.

Transco president and chief executive Alan Ortiz said Friday that the JBIC had already sent its approval via e-mail, but that the official approval would likely come this week.

"When we receive the official letter, we'll announce the tenders for the project," he said.

The details of the loan, including how much the government would have to shell out as counterpart funding, would be discussed after the receipt of the formal JBIC approval, he said.

The Transco board approved Thursday the project configurations for the P4.4-billion interconnection system capacity build-up project.

He said the project had likewise obtained the nod of the National Economic and Development Authority-Investment Coordination Committee (Neda-ICC).

According to the approved project design, the project will be broken down into two components: the Cebu-Negros and the Negros-Panay aspects.

Under the interconnection and capacity up-rating of the Cebu-Negros-Panay lines, both components' current capacity to transmit power to the different islands in the Visayas will be doubled, from 100 megawatts (MW) to 200 MW upon completion in December next year.

The completion of the project will likewise optimize the utilization of indigenous power from geothermal energy-endowed Leyte and offer a medium-term solution to the looming power crisis in the Visayas.

The Cebu-Negros project entails the installation of a 109-kilometer, 138-kilovolt overhead transmission line and a 17.8-km sub-sea cable connecting Transco's Santander substation in Cebu and the Amlan substation in Negros Oriental.

The Negros-Panay component will double the transfer capacity of the 18.8-km sub-sea cable from 100 MW to 200 MW.

Some of the entities that had expressed interest in bidding for the CNP project include Kanematsu Corp. and JPower Systems of Japan, Alstom of France and Siemens of Germany, Ortiz said.

Although funded by the Miyazawa fund and backed by the JBIC, he said the project was open to non-Japanese contractors.

The bidding for the project would start as soon as loan details are finalized, likely by next month.

TRADE Secretary Cesar V. Purisima welcomed visiting Li Huifen (second from left), president of China Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Machinery and Electronic Products, and her group during a courtesy call recently. Discussed during the meeting were the possible areas where trade between the Philippines and the People's Republic of China could be expanded. The group was led by PRC Ambassador to the Philippines Wang Chunggi (left) and was accompanied by Benito Lim (right), honorary chair of the Federation of Electrical and Electronics Suppliers and Manufacturers of the Philippines and chair of Automatic Center.

AEV feeds subsidiary posts 100% increase in revenue

By Christine A. Gaylican

DESPITE the erratic prices of its raw material requirements, Fil-Am Foods Corp., the animal feeds and sow breeder subsidiary of the Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc., still managed to rake in P80 million in revenues last year.

"This is close to a 100-percent increase from what we made in 2002, which is about P40 million," Fil-Am Foods Corp. president Antonio Moraza said.

Moraza said the revenue growth was made possible through enhancing the cost efficiency of the company's production operations.

Fil-Am Foods' feeds manufacturing plant in Capas, Tarlac and in Iligan City are fully automated and they can consistently produce high quality feeds at low cost, Moraza explained.

The Aboitiz Group, through Pilmico Foods Corp., now owns 100 percent of Fil-Am Foods. It acquired the shares of its American partners, PM Nutrition Co. Inc. and Tyson Foods Inc., last year.

After only five years in the Philippine feeds market, PMI Nutrition—the brand name carried by Fil-Am Foods products—is recognized by both commercial and backyard animal raisers in the country.

The company is aggressive in carving a niche in the hog sector, which accounts for at least 85 percent of its market. The company's biggest competitors are San Miguel Foods Corp.'s BMEG Feeds and Cargill Philippines Inc.'s Purina Feeds.

Feed sales in 2003 reached averaged at 105,000 to 110,000 bags a month.

The increasing demand for its products prompted the company to expand its production plants in Tarlac and Iligan. The expansion projects will be completed by end-March.

"This year, we have increased the size of our nursery barns in the breeder farm and are in the process of expanding the capacity of our feed mills from the current 20 tons per hour to 40 tons per hour capacity," noted Moraza.

According to Moraza, some P150 million will be spent for the expansion of these plants. Financing for the expansion program was derived from Land Bank of the Philippines as arranged by its banking affiliate Union Bank of the Philippines.

Next Mobile income hits ₱23M

By Clarissa S. Batino

NEXT Mobile Inc., formerly Nextel, reported a net income of P23 million last year, after incurring more than P700 million in losses in 2002.

The company claimed to be the first and only fully integrated digital wireless operator in the country.

The company that integrates digital two-way radio, mobile telephony and data services said efforts to refocus operations, intensify marketing and restructure its finances bore fruit last year.

It said it had also cleaned up its subscriber base resulting in a reduction to 33,000 subscribers to 55,000.

As of end-2003, the company's asset base stood at P3.4 billion while its revenue hit P500 million.

Wilfred Racadio, the company's chief finance officer, said the new management embarked on certain marketing and operational changes as well as a financial restructuring in order to turnaround the company.

He said the company restructured its capital and cleaned up its balance sheet.

The restructuring involved converting into equity about P13.3 billion in advances and notes payable to shareholders, said the finance officer.

A group led by Next Mobile president Mel Velarde acquired the company in 2002. Soon after, the company did a backdoor listing at the stock exchange after it bought 96.2 percent of Premier Entertainment Productions, Inc. for P6.58 billion.

Racadio said that to recover financially, the company focused on its key strengths and anchored its marketing strategy to its unique technology.

Next Mobile said it would continue to build a niche in the communications industry. It had gotten rid of unprofitable subscriber plans and promos, and refocused on higher value rate plans.

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of February 27, 2004)

STOCK	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	8,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	17	17	17	17	35,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	46	46	45.5	45.5	317,100
China Banking Corp.	650	650	650	650	1,860
Citystate Savings Bank	16.25	16.25	16.25	16.25	2,500
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	38.5	39	38.5	38.5	50,400
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.59	0.59	0.56	0.56	280,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	25	26	25	25	430,100
Philippine National Bank	23.25	23.25	23.25	23.25	500
Phil. Savings Bank	27	27	27	27	24,300
Security Bank Corp.	17.25	17.25	17.25	17.25	600
Union Bank of the Phil.	26	26	26	26	300
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	150,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	135	135	135	135	10
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.34	1.34	1.34	1.34	9,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	165	169	165	166	9,200
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1495	1495	1495	1495	1,620
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	23	23	23	23	1,100
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.68	0.7	470,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	885	890	880	885	73,020
ISM Communications Corp.	0.035	0.037	0.035	0.037	6,200,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	1.62	1.64	1.56	1.56	13,689,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	980	980	970	970	107,760
Ivantage Corp.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	20,000
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.011	22,000,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	19.25	19.5	19.25	19.5	5,300
Manila Electric Co. B	32	32	31.5	32	563,300
Petron Corp.	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	770,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	100,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.26	20,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3.2	3.2	3.15	3.2	547,000
Negros Navigation Co.Inc.	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	10,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.58	1.6	1.58	1.6	80,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.28	1.34	1.28	1.34	1,540,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	116,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	31	31.5	31	31.5	66,500
Jollibee Foods Corp.	19.25	19.5	18.75	19	293,900
Swift Food Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.25	0.25	260,000
San Miguel Corp. A	57	57.5	57	57.5	200,400
San Miguel Corp. B	70	70	70	70	54,300
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	190,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Atok-Big Wedge Co. Inc.	8	8	8	8	4,000
Ayala Corp.	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	2,900,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	3,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1	1	1	1	155,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.5	2,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.6	0.6	0.58	0.59	6,360,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	990,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	20,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	23.5	23.75	23.5	23.5	152,000
Global Business Hldgs Inc.	45	48	45	48	500
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.9	1.94	1.88	1.94	190,000
Keppel Holdings	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	60,000
Medco Holdings	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.28	5,020,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.02	1.02	2,372,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	5,290,000
Philcomsat Holdings Corp.	1.18	1.18	1.18	1.18	154,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	10,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1	1	1	1	3,000
South China Resources Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	10,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.26	0.28	0.26	0.28	20,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	16,000
Pryce Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	100,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	50,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.5	0.52	0.5	0.52	1,450,000
Manila Jockey Club	9	9	9	9	3,000
Mondragon Intl Phils Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	300,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	23.25	23.25	23.25	23.25	1,042,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series M	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	800
PLDT (10% Pref) Series P	10.75	10.75	10.75	10.75	800
PLDT (10% Pref) Series R	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	800
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,200
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,900
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,400
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,600
OTHERS					
Far Eastern University	400	400	400	400	4,410
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.5	5.6	5.4	5.5	4,723,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	30,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	10,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.205	0.21	0.2	0.21	700,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.04	1.06	1.04	1.04	1,258,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.1	2.16	2.1	2.16	200,000
City & Land Developers	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	1,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	2	2	2	2	10,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.1	6.1	6	6.1	36,130,000
MINING					
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	1.46	2.1	1.46	1.5	960,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	1,200,000
OIL					
Sinophil Corp.	0.027	0.027	0.025	0.025	1,100,000

Sluggish trading seen

From page B1

A retired military official that supported Poe dismissed the reported plan, saying it was a government ploy to create unrest as an excuse to declare a state of emergency and in turn suspend the elections.

And to add to the political excitement, President Macapagal-Arroyo has finally overtaken Poe in the latest Pulse Asia survey.

"Some investors reacted positively to Ms Macapagal's gains as they view her as the most qualified among the current rosters of presidentiables," Jovis Vistan of AB Capital Securities Inc. wrote in his weekly report.

However, another poll by the Social Weather Stations (SWS) showed Poe edging out Ms Macapagal.

Another bright spot is on the government budget deficit. Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong said on Friday the initial budget deficit numbers reflected that government spending was contained and that revenues were on track to meet the full-year budget shortfall target.

The budget deficit is closely watched for its impact on interest rates since an increase in borrowing costs may weaken the ability of companies to seek funding for their expansion plans.

Analysts also noted that the peso stayed at the 56.30:$1 level since the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas chose to keep benchmark interest rates at current levels. But it also warned that it might tighten policy to avert a further weakening of the currency.

Metrobank's Yu said investors were also watching out for dividend announcements this week.

Dominant fixed line carrier Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) staved off earlier gains the other week as it rose a mere 0.52 percent or P5 last week to P970.

Its subsidiary Pilipino Telephone Corp. (Piltel) jumped 18 percent or 24 centavos during the week to P1.56 on talk of a possible restructuring of the company's debt profile with the help of PLDT mobile phone unit Smart Communications.

Piltel corporate information officer Deborah Tan said last week that the company was not engaged in any talks with creditors to "rearrange" Piltel's debts, but noted that the Piltel board approved a request by Smart to be furnished with certain documents pertaining to the "indebtedness of Piltel."

San Miguel Corp. (SMC), the country's largest food and beverage company meanwhile rose 2.7 percent or P1.50 to P57.50. Yu said this may be ahead of rumors of a possible proxy fight after the government, through the Presidential Commission on Good Government, said it planned to install two new directors to the SMC board.

"Moreover, what's keeping the market from going up is the double-digit gains we saw in 2003. We have not seen a significant correction since and a lot of traders are concerned that we're due for one," Vistan said.

Yu said he expected the Phisix to trade between a range of 1,460 and 1,500 on thin volume due to the prevailing political uncertainties. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

Globe accuses ABS-CBN ...

From page B1

originally intended."

"It appears that MTB uses the number 223 for its promo/contest. Said number is the access code used by Globe's prepaid subscribers to reload their cards. The large number of TV viewers using the access code 223 to join the promo will result to the clogging of the reloading system to the prejudice of Globe's prepaid subscribers," Santillan said.

The NTC legal department said it had basis to act on Globe's request without previous hearing because it involved public interest as provided by Section 17 of the Public Service Act.

Let's scrap compulsory retirement

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

THE BIGGEST problem the older person faces is that, according to the labor code, he is compelled to retire at age 65. (By the way, the "older person" is the term now preferred by the United Nations, instead of "elderly" or "senior citizen.")

All of a sudden, after a lifetime of hard work, gaining experience and know-how, the older person is set adrift. If he is lucky, his meager pension from the SSS is enhanced by a private scheme of a generous employer. If he retires from government service, the GSIS is the only source of his pension. Either way, in Philippine culture, his grownup sons and daughters are his retirement haven.

The idea of compulsory retirement at 65 became popular about 50 years ago. Business leaders then thought that the work force had to be continually freshened with new blood. So, the older employees would have to give way to the young.

When I landed my first job right after college in 1951 (it now seems so long ago in a galaxy far, far away), the Ayala companies had just brought down the compulsory retirement age from 65 to 60. It was thought that the rule would encourage the young employees like myself, as they did not have to wait for someone to retire at 65 before climbing up the ladder.

It did not work out quite that way. Because of the post World War II business boom, the company I was working with was growing fast. The organizational chart was exploding not only vertically, but also horizontally. New positions at the various management levels were being created: administrative/executive assistant, district manager, assistant vice president, senior vice president, and so forth. And when the president reached 60 and he was considered quite valuable, he was kept on by putting him on contract. But, eventually, everybody had to retire.

Today, a retiree becomes practically a ward of the government. He can qualify for a senior citizen's card (usually by lying about his retirement income), entitling him to a 20-percent discount at drug stores, restaurants and other places. He carries his card as if it were a begging bowl. Or he can sign up at the Department of Social Welfare so he can learn to weave handicraft or run a *sari-sari* store. These government programs, though well meaning, actually strips the retiree of his self-respect.

It is time to amend the labor code so that it no longer discriminates against the older person, and render him the respect he has earned. This law on compulsory retirement by reason of age should be scrapped.

The Philippine Association of Retired Persons (PARP) is drafting a bill that it hopes will find a sponsor when Congress reopens in July. The bill is patterned after a US law (the US Embassy kindly sent PARP a copy of the law) enacted in 1967. Some of the core provisions follow.

"It shall be unlawful for an employer to fail or refuse to hire or discharge any individual or otherwise discriminate against any individual with respect to his compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, because of such individual's age.

"It shall be unlawful for an employment agency to fail or refuse to refer for employment, or otherwise discriminate against, any individual because of such individual's age, or to classify or refer for employment any individual on the basis of such individual's age.

"It shall be unlawful for a labor organization to exclude or to expel from its membership, or otherwise discriminate against, any individual because of his age."

Wouldn't this be a great law to enact in this strong republic of ours?

Security Bank to hold series of briefings

SECURITY Bank will hold an economic briefing for its top-level clients on March 3. Guest speaker Peter Wallace, head of Wallace Business Forum Inc., will discuss the economic prospects for 2004, global and local growth industries, and critical medium-term issues in the Philippines.

This by-invitation-only program aims to inform the bank's clients about various relevant topics that could impact their businesses. Security Bank president Alberto Villarosa said the idea is to help clients make the right business and personal decisions during these difficult times. This is the first of a series of customer briefings that Security Bank will organize this year.

The bank's corporate relationship group senior vice president Patricia May Siy takes the lead in organizing the briefing. Future briefings for Security Bank's clients will include sessions on where and how best to invest excess funds.

Villarosa said that focus on customers needs was a core value in Security Bank. "Anticipating and responding to their needs is key to sustaining a good relationship with our clients," Villarosa added.

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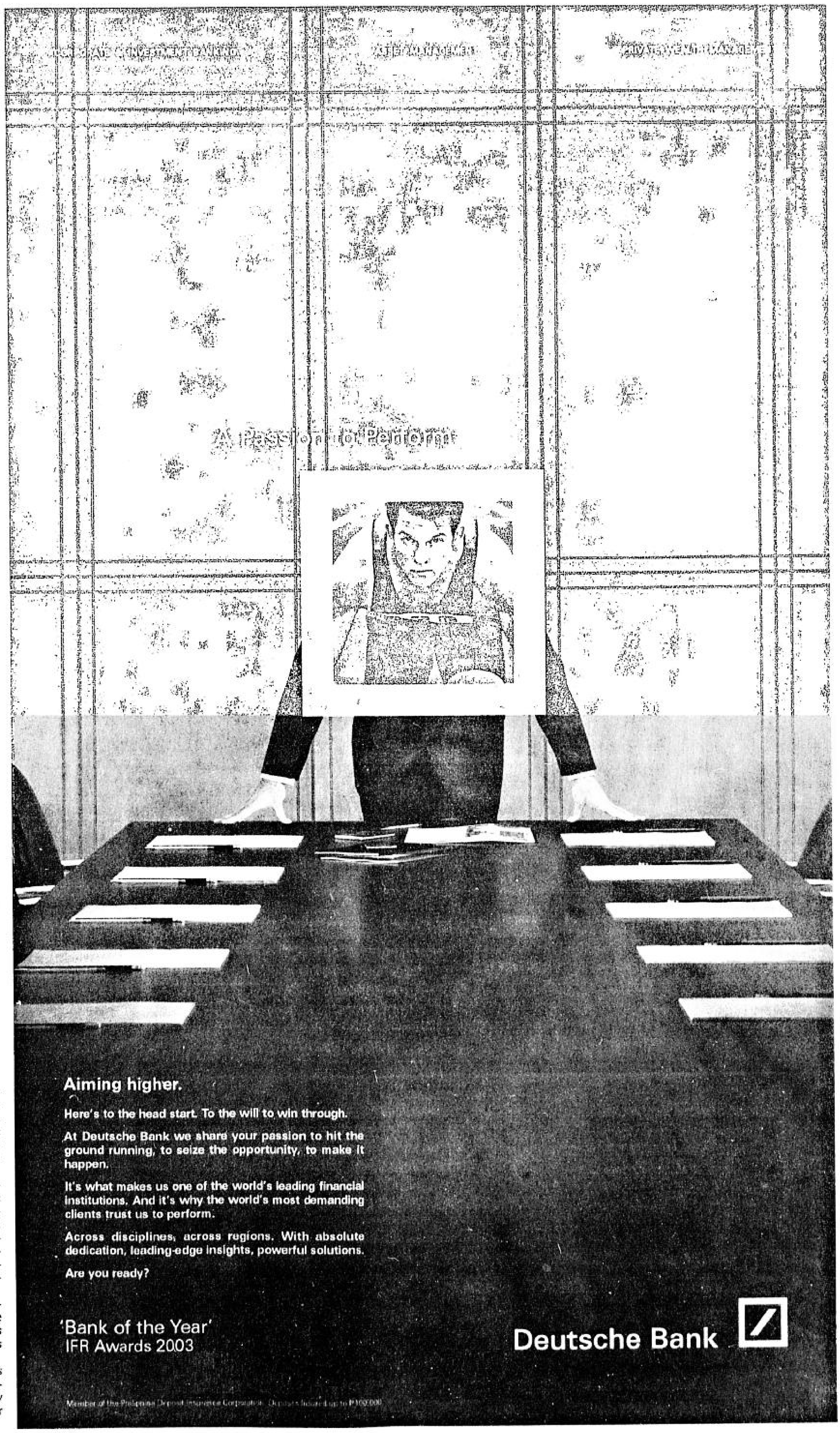

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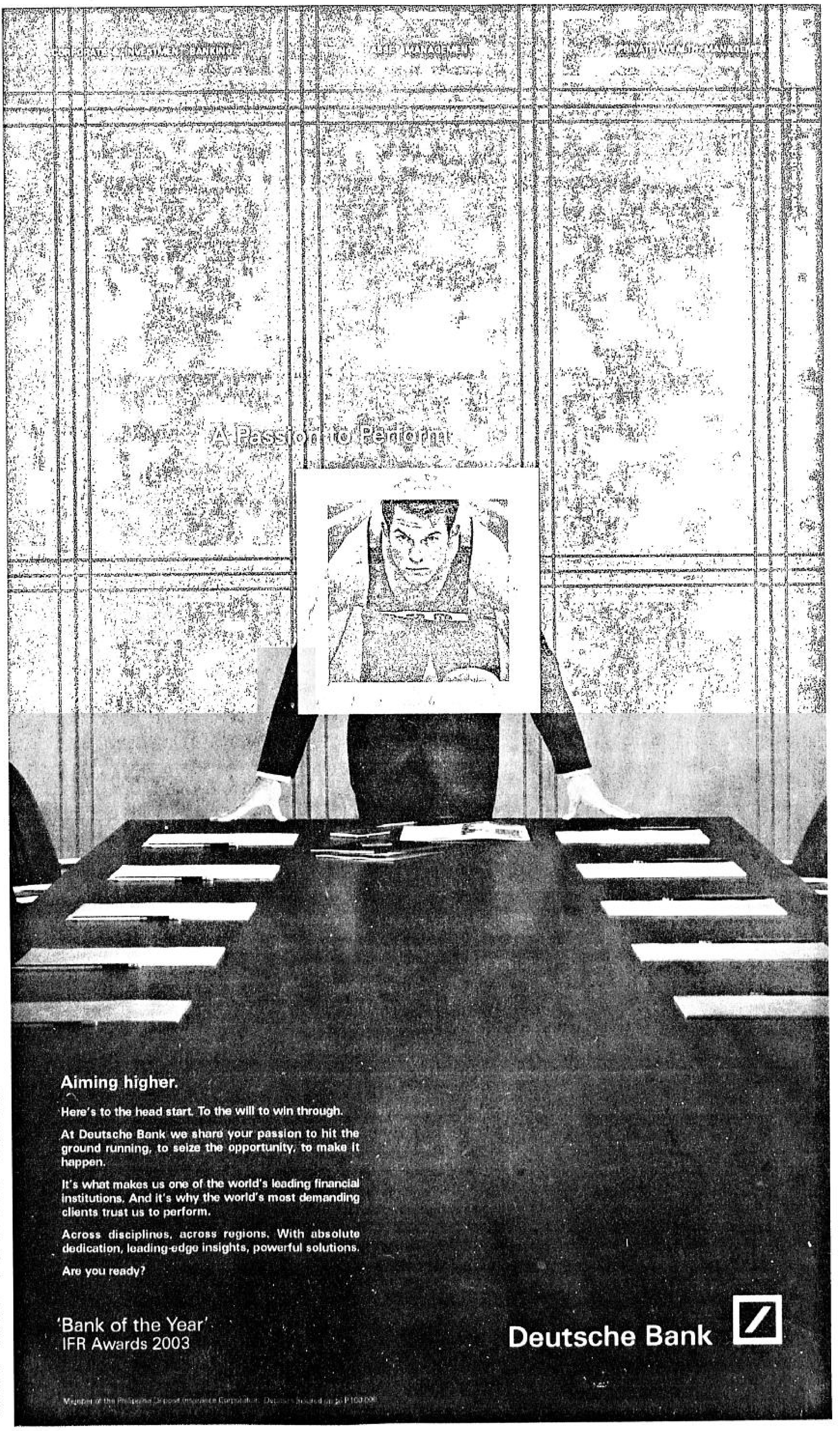

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RP seeks $20-M loan from Saudi for Mindanao projects

THE PHILIPPINES is seeking a $20-million loan from the Saudi government to implement additional infrastructure projects in Mindanao and help boost the economy in the South.

According to Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong, the Department of Finance was in talks with the Saudi Development Fund for the approval of the official development assistance.

"The negotiation for the loan has been in the works for the past two years, but it is only now that the talks seem to be moving forward," Amatong told reporters.

She added that the recent state visit of President Macapagal-Arroyo to the Middle East helped strengthen the negotiations.

The government is now seeking ways to maximize the economic potentials of Mindanao, whose development is hampered by conflicts between the military and secessionist groups.

The establishment of key infrastructure projects is part of the government's efforts to entice businesses to locate in the area, and therefore create much-needed jobs.

Last December, the government sealed a deal with the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) for the Y3.717-billion loan that would fund the development of road projects in Central Mindanao.

The loan, which carries an annual interest of 2.2 percent and is payable in 30 years, will finance the construction of highways in Maguindanao and Sultan Kudarat, two of the poorest provinces in the country.

Aside from the road projects, JBIC also agreed to provide a $22.5-million loan for various peace and economic development initiatives in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

In April last year, the government approved the implementation of P12.5 billion worth of development projects for Mindanao. The projects include roads and agricultural support facilities, such as for irrigation, to develop Mindanao as the country's food basket.

The projects are financed by foreign lending agencies, among others are the World Bank and JBIC. *Michelle V. Remo*

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INQUIRER

BIR set to amend tax regulation on 'tiangges'

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue plans to amend a revenue regulation that imposes taxes on *tiangge* operators in a bid to improve tax collection.

The BIR said provisions of the recently issued RR No. 16-2003 might not be enough to meet its objective of plugging tax leakages in this sector.

"We will review the revenue regulation to make sure flea market vendors remit the proper taxes to the government," said Revenue Deputy Commissioner Kim Henares.

Henares cited a provision in the revenue regulation that tasked *tiangge* organizers to "ensure" that flea market operators pay the right taxes, but did not particularly state that the former should withhold the taxes imposed on them and remit the collection to the government.

The revenue regulation defines a *tiangge* organizer as the one who owns spaces, including malls, that are leased out to flea market vendors. A *tiangge* operator is the one who sells products through a *tiangge* and pays rent to the organizer.

Henares said the BIR might include in the amendments to the revenue regulation the granting of incentives to *tiangge* organizers that would withhold taxes on *tiangge* operators for the government. The proposal is expected to encourage flea market organizers to help the government in collecting taxes from vendors, she said.

But she also said that instead of giving incentives, the BIR could also opt to impose penalties on *tiangge* organizers that would fail to withhold and remit the taxes imposed on *tiangge* operators.

The BIR last year issued RR No. 16-2003 as part of its efforts to improve revenue collection and thus help ease the country's budget deficit.

The revenue ruling was also issued to address complaints from mainstream businessmen, who called for a level playing field. They said that while they pay taxes to the government, competing *tiangge* operators grab a significant share of the market without paying taxes.

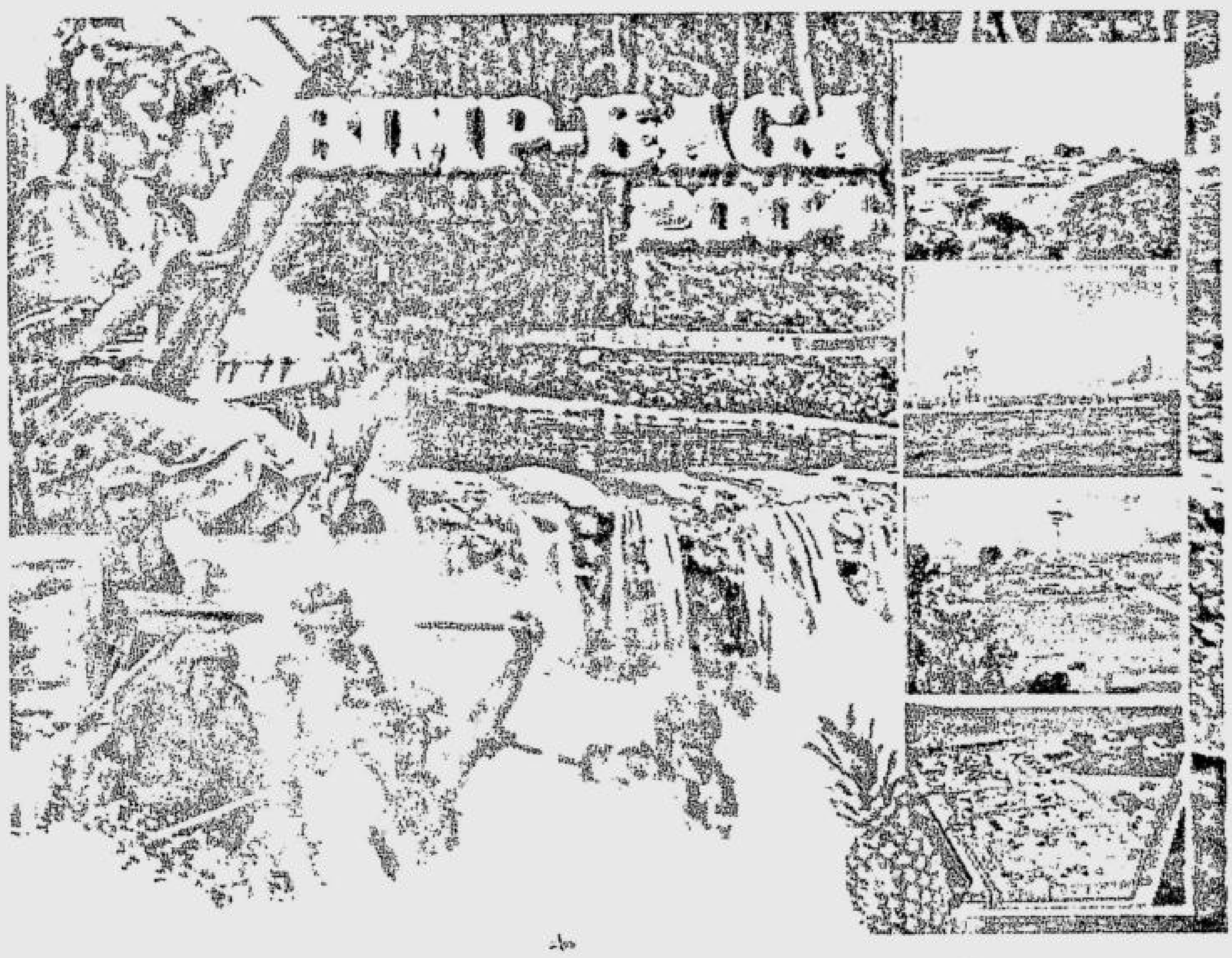
Under the revenue regulation, a *tiangge* operator should pay a business tax (either value added tax or percentage tax) of P150 per day or P4,500 per month, and an income tax of P50 per day or P1,500 per month.

The regulation mandates that the taxes be paid in advance to make sure the BIR is able to collect the taxes from tiangge operators, who normally relocates from one site to another.

If the advanced payment exceeds the actual tax obligation, the BIR will reimburse the excess collection or carry it over to the next tax period.

Affected parties expressed opposition to the revenue regulation. Some *tiangge* organizers, concerned that the imposition of taxes might discourage their clients from doing business, said the BIR should spare flea market vendors from paying taxes because they earn very little and that they can hardly make both ends meet.

Directly affected *tiangge* operators are also opposed to the revenue ruling, saying the BIR should focus on catching big businesses that are tax delinquents.



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Electricity bourse to open in December

THE COMMERCIAL operation of the wholesale electricity spot market (WESM) is scheduled to start in December, following the award of the market management and project management contracts to ABB of Sweden and M-Co of New Zealand.

Energy Secretary Vincent Perez said in an interview Friday that commercial operation of the electricity bourse would start 285 days from the signing of the contracts, which would take place March 17.

The prototype for the system, however, should be ready by June, he said.

He said the actual operation of the WESM was not expected to encounter hitches as the Department of Justice had already issued a "favorable opinion" on the awarding of the $8.47-million software and infrastructure contract to ABB by National Transmission Co.

Perez said the more than $8-million cost of the hardware and software was way below the initial $20-million budget set during the pre-bidding days for the WESM two years ago.

These savings, Perez said, could be passed on to consumers in terms of lower market fees. *Abigail L. Ho*

Improvement in credit rating system pushed

JAPANESE investment firm Nomura Research Inc. is pushing for improvement in the credit rating system in the Philippine bond market.

In a proposal submitted to the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), NRI said a credit rating system in the corporate bond market was essential because it would pave the way for investors, issuers and intermediaries to make sound decisions based on assessments of credit risks.

In discussions with the private sector, NRI said the credit rating system would have some impediments.

The revision of taxation on corporate bond issues for instance may raise documentary stamp taxes imposed on bond issues.

"A credit rating system as well as other fundamental infrastructure contributes to determining the fair market value and thus help smoothing corporate finance, enhancing profitability of financial services and accelerating corporate rehabilitation," NRI said.

"Primary users of credit ratings are investors, creditors, depositors but not issuers, debtors who are rated. This may make the credit rating agency look like a unique business mode as its client is different from its payer," it said.

Also, some rating firms such as those in Japan provide credit ratings for life insurance firms without requests from issuers. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

Communication agency adopts global identity

CARAT International, one of the world's largest independent media communication agency networks, has announced the global launch of its new corporate identity.

In a statement, Carat Philippines said the old Carat corporate identity was developed in 1988 when the firm was still a planning and buying agency. Carat has since grown to become a leading independent media communications agency. The Carat network has grown to cover 63 countries worldwide with billings rising to £16.5 billion in 2002, from about £4 billion. The new corporate identity was developed to reflect the changes in the company and its expanded business offerings.

Kim Walker, regional chief operating officer of Carat Asia-Pacific said, "The market leadership success of the Carat network has been built on a foundation of continuing innovation and customer service enhancement."

Jocelyn Domingo, president of Carat Philippines said, "The Carat brand is all about the delivery of fully integrated media communications services that drive our clients' business forward. Carat offers vision combines with accountability and the ability to implement across all communication channels. The identity has been chosen to reflect our delivery and our ambition in an increasingly screen based world."

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GTEB expects 15% growth in 2005 garments exports

By Ronnel W. Domingo

DESPITE the removal of export quotas next year, the Garments and Textile Export Board expressed confidence that garments exports will manage to grow by at least 15 percent.

This assumes that the country will keep its traditional export markets despite the phase-out of the quota system next year.

The removal of the quota system, which assures the Philippines of an export volume to key markets overseas, will test the garments industry's capability to compete with other countries for export markets.

The removal of the quota system is part of the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing under the World Trade Organization, which the country joined shortly after its creation in 1994.

The WTO-ATC provided for a phase out of the quotas in three stages over a 10-year transition period, with the aim of making the industry a market-driven business.

The GTEB, an attached agency of the Department of Trade and Industry, however, expects that the textile industry will continue its slump before it gets its act together and go for growth.

Agency data showed that garments and textile exports shrank by 4 percent to $2.6 billion in 2003.

GTEB does not expect a significant growth this year.

"Our forecast for 2004 took into account that critical categories (specific businesses assured of quota shares) account for 44 percent of the country's total business and that there are natural price adjustments in the major markets United States, Canada and the European Uion," GTEB executive director Serafin N. Juliano said.

The official added that in 2004, a feature in the quota system called carryforward—which allows a country to "borrow" volumes from the next year's quota—will no longer be available since there will be no more quotas in 2005.

Also, Juliano cited an analysis made by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development on the impact of the removal of quotas in the global market, which shows that there would be no rapid change in 2005 on where importing countries would get their clothes.

BSP to screen banks' independent directors

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas will soon set up an accreditation system to screen independent directors who will sit on the board of banks and financial institutions.

BSP Deputy Governor for bank supervision Alberto Reyes said in an interview that the move was part of the BSP's efforts to ensure that best practices were adopted by banks.

"We're moving toward that because we want to have a pool of independent directors who can be assigned to banks and can also be tapped by the Securities and Exchange Commission," Reyes said.

Jesus Estanislao of the Institute of Corporate Directors hailed the BSP's move saying that it will soon put the banks' corporate governance practices at par with the world's best.

"Independence is going to be increasingly defined following the model in Australia where there is a certification system. Each independent director has to be certified and must take a program," Estanislao said.

Banks are currently required to appoint at least two independent directors to their board.

These directors are tasked to provide an independent voice to the board of local banks, many of which are family-run.

Reyes said banks were still in the process of "getting used to" the requirement that they must appoint independent directors to the board.

"But slowly we're moving toward that. This is what is being done in other countries," he said.

Mobile Computing on the Up and Up

MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

Expect the Unexpected

Inevitably, notebooks and wireless applications create new expectations with business users who want to maintain their work sessions without disruption as they move in and out of a company's offices or departments and in and out of wireless hotspots. But service discontinuities mean wireless notebook users have to operate in an intermittently connected world. Senior managers who need to make crucial on-the-spot decisions cannot always get timely data when and where they need it. People in different time zones have difficulty working as a team because information is not always readily available. In addition, employees cannot be as productive when they are away from the network or if there is a network failure that prevents them from using their mobile applications to gather information.

The rapid development of mobile hardware is exemplified by the strong growth in notebook sales, and the deployment of WLANs and related equipment, and hotspots. And this interest for mobile hardware and WLANs is helping to drive the development of mobile software applications.

The Next Big Thing in Software? Mobilized applications!

As users mobilize, so must software. To cater to changing expectations and step closer to satisfying the increasingly complex wants and needs of mobile users, industry leaders like Intel are helping to adapt applications for the new mobile world. Through its Mobilized Software Initiative, Intel is working with more than 30 global software companies and application vendors throughout Asia Pacific to develop mobilized applications.

The "mobilizing" of software can be applied to a wide range of applications in areas such as collaboration, security, education and business intelligence. Mobilized applications will help wean users off from having to depend on the network for accessing information. Applications are available on the notebook rather than the network, making data available to the user offline. This enables mobile users, for example, a mobile sales force, insurance agent, construction worker or tech support, to access an intranet, to work anywhere, any time, and to work without disruption, even when network connections are interrupted. A travelling salesperson may need to access the latest sales projections, or an insurance agent meeting with a customer at an airport may need to download forms to sign. A manufacturing plant must operate in a clean environment, free of dust and stray electronic signals. These requirements make it nearly impossible for employees to rely on standard office tools, such as paper and desktop PCs. Notebooks and mobile applications can be used to overcome these limitations by connecting them to a WLAN. It helps enhance communications among factory staff, reduced scrap, lowered costs, and increased productivity.

Application synchronization helps provide mobile users with graceful reconnections, and allows them to control whether they are working in online or offline mode when a connection is available. This results in the mobile user more effective and productive regardless of connection status. Because mobilized applications are reconnectable, they offer greater scalability, reliability and stability to wired desktop users, too.

Take Your Head Out of the Sand. Get Unwired!

Mobilized solutions will dynamically and gracefully manage network disruptions, such as those caused by inherently intermittent wireless connections. Users don't need to worry about wasting time reconnecting or losing critical data because of dropped connections, allowing them to be productive more than ever before. And, mobilized applications are being written so that they can be access on various computing devices, such as desktops, servers, handhelds or tablet PCs, not just notebooks.

Mobility is a trend continues to grow and shows no signs of slowing. Businesses and employees who refuse to embrace mobility will miss out on the productivity and efficiency gains that it provides.

In an environment where information access and productivity are essentials for a company to remain competitive, enabling a mobile workforce is a must. Failure to take advantage of mobility will leave your head permanently stuck in the sand and your customers looking elsewhere.

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Duck raising is something to quack about

By Christine A. Gaylican

SUCCESS STORY

VICTORIA, Laguna—No one will suspect from his rubber slippers, white shirt and jeans that farmer-entreprenuer Leo Dator earns no less than P40 million a year from raising ducks in his backyard.

"We produce most of the duck eggs that go to Pateros and other parts of Metro Manila and Laguna," shares Dator, owner of Dator's Duck Farm in Barangay Nanhaya.

"Our farm is the largest in Laguna and probably in the country," he adds.

'Secret' feeds formula

Dator and his wife Josephine have a flock of 55,000 ducks that hatch nearly the same number of eggs daily.

While other poultry owners whine about skyrocketing prices of feeds, Dator's duck farm has no problem dealing with high prices of commercial feeds as he uses his own feed mixture using available root crops.

"We feed them natural feeds comprised of cassava and camote (sweet potato), which we buy from upland farmers from as far as Nueva Ecija and Quezon," Dator notes.

Dator, who graduated with a Chemical Engineering degree from the University of the Philippines-Los Baños, experimented with cassava, camote and other crops to replace expensive commercial feeds.

His discovery, according to Dator, has proved useful over the past two decades, especially since he inherited the duck raising business from his father in 1984.

The salesman-turned-farmer shares that from only 1,000 ducks, he managed to grow his flock to 55,000 ducks.

He expects that his flock will increase to 100,000 ducks within the next two years.

"The natural feeds mixture we have been using is of course significantly cheaper than the commercial feeds. Ducks fed with the natural feeds are healthier and have longer egg-laying years," explains Dator.

With his natural feeds mixture, Dator spends only P2.50 to P3 per kilo as compared to the commercial feeds that sell for P12 to P13 per kilo.

The dry natural feeds comprise only half of the diet of ducks.

Dator explains that the ducks are also fed of pond snails (tulya), gathered from nearby Laguna de Bay.

Best-selling

Mang Leo's wife, Josephine, said the farm has ready buyers for the eggs.

Helping the couple are 40 workers, who feed the ducks and collect the eggs.

The eggs are transported to Manila and nearby provinces where they are processed into *itlog na pula* (salted eggs) and *penoy* (boiled duck egg).

Like her husband, she also resigned from her office job in Manila to help her husband at the farm.

Good prospects

When Pateros lost its duck farms to commercial and industrial establishments, the town of Victoria took up the slack.

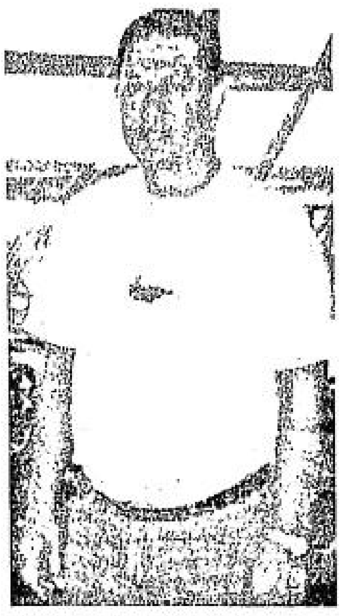
The Philippines produced about P2.5 billion worth of duck eggs in 2003.

Josephine and Leo believe that the prospects of the business are still bright despite the bird flu scare gripping the poultry industry in Asia.

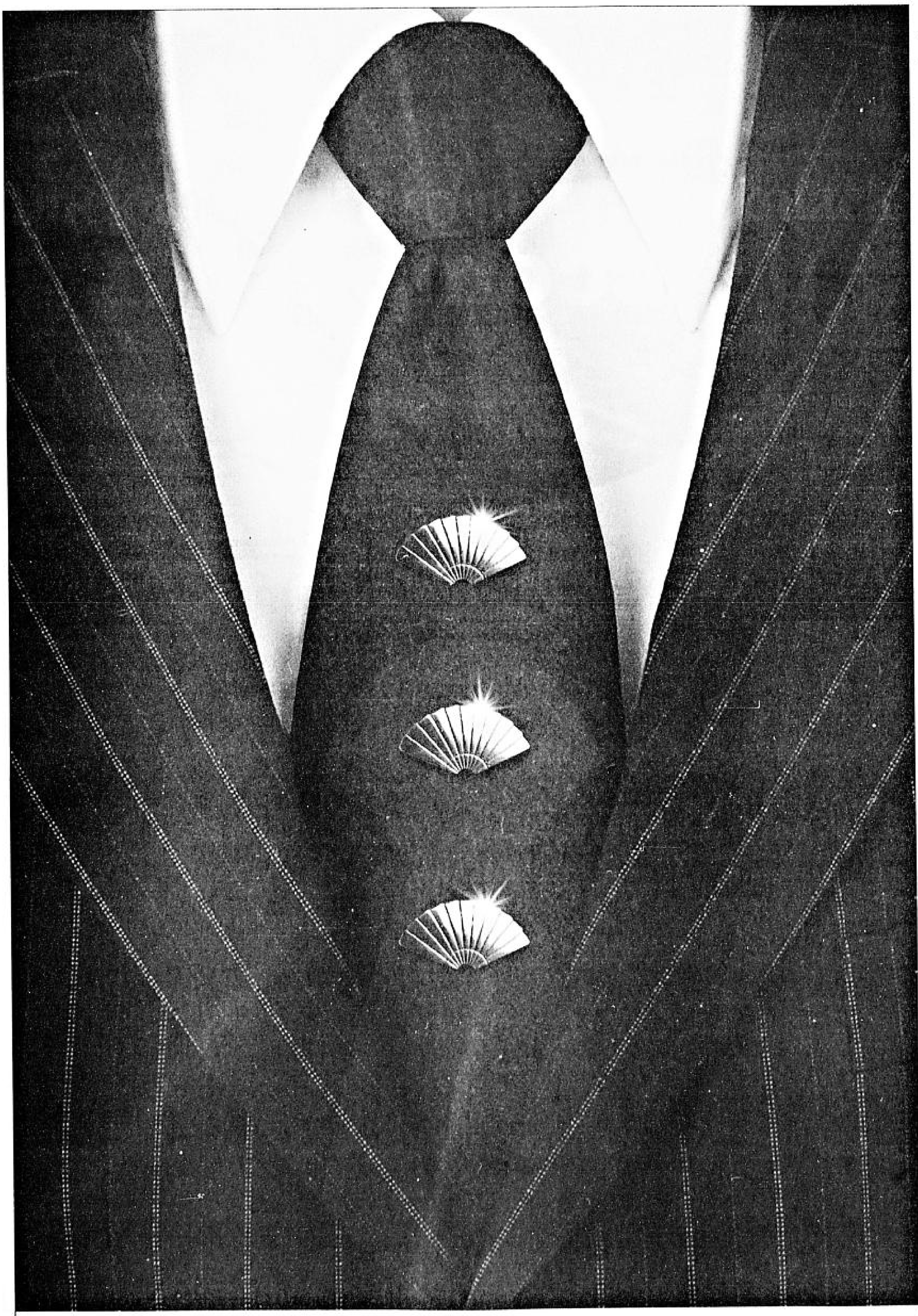
"Philippine ducks have stronger resistance to disease than chicken broilers," says Dator.

Data from the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics showed that farmgate prices of duck eggs rose by 1.43 percent to P46.25 a kilogram from P45.60 in 2002.

Dator shares that his latest pet project is to commercially produce the natural duck feeds he uses and sell them at lower prices to fellow duck raisers.



DATOR: The "itik" king



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ADB satisfied with Cordillera agri projects

BAGUIO CITY—The Asian Development Bank gave a satisfactory rating to the progress of one of the largest agricultural projects in the Cordillera.

The most recent ADB loan review mission said the Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resource Management (CHARM) project met many of its performance targets and complied with the ADB's standards on loan use.

The CHARM calls for the development of infrastructure and social services to reduce poverty in the provinces.

These include the rehabilitation of farm-to-market access roads, community irrigation systems and domestic water supply systems.

The CHARM summary report presented here recently showed that farm-to-market roads were 77.56 percent completed as of January this year while 95.83 percent of domestic water supply projects were installed.

Seven demonstration research on agro-processing and post-harvest technology were also conducted during the period.

Sixty-four farmers' field schools were put up in 2003.

In 1999, the government failed to give its counterpart funding to the ADB, which almost led to the cancellation of one of the biggest projects under the administration of former President Joseph Estrada.

The project will end this year, said Cameron Odsey, project coordinator of CHARM project.

The government was able to solicit $8.3 million for infrastructure projects and another $7.6 million for agricultural support services from the ADB.

The government sought another $21 million from the ADB and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to support agriculture-related projects. *Desiree Caluza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Bus rates down by 50-60% in Ecija route

CABANATUAN CITY—Passengers from this city to Quezon City are enjoying an unusual gift from three bus companies that are giving 50 to 60 percent fare discounts for the 114-kilometer route.

The discounted rate was due to a raging "fare war" among bus companies operating here.

Baliwag Transit Inc., one of the biggest bus companies in Central Luzon, is charging each passenger P65 on its air-conditioned buses, said Crispin Casino, Baliwag accounting supervisor.

The firm used to charge P108 a passenger before the "fare war" that started last month.

The bus firms ES Bus Co. and Five Star charge their passengers P55 and P65, respectively, for the same route.

Reports here said the ES Bus Co., the newest bus company to operate in the city, started to lower its fare on Feb. 8.

"Baliwag Transit was forced to lower its fare, otherwise no one would patronize us," Casino said.

He said their discounted fare is limited to the Cabanatuan City-Quezon City route.

Passengers were surprised, but welcomed the fare discount.

However, bus drivers and conductors who earn on a percentage basis were sulking at the bus firms' decision to lower fare.

Bus drivers get 11.5 percent while conductors get 6 percent of gross collections.

Before the fare drop, drivers easily earned more than P650 a trip. Their earnings had dropped to P350 due to the discounted fare.

Conductors said they used to earn more than P350 but their earnings were now down to less than P200. *Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

ILLEGAL TAX BREAKS

EU to launch trade sanctions against US

BRUSSELS—The European Union is to launch record multimillion-dollar trade sanctions against the United States from Monday in retaliation for illegal tax breaks given to US exporters.

Backed by a World Trade Organization ruling in a long-running row, EU duties will be slapped on a wide range of US goods entering Europe until the US Congress repeals the law allowing the tax breaks.

The sanctions, in a long-running row over the Foreign Sales Corporation (FSC) law, risk re-igniting a full-blown transatlantic trade war and follow recent EU-US spats over steel and anti-dumping legislation among others.

The US administration says the EU decision is regrettable—and insists it is pushing the Congress hard to push through legislation to end the tax breaks "as quickly as possible."

"We've urged the European Commission to refrain from imposing retaliatory tariffs, given the complexity of the legislation and we regret that they are moving forward," said a spokesman for the US mission to the EU.

"But we will continue to work with Congress to get the legislation moving as quickly as possible," he added.

But in the meantime the EU insists the sanctions—in the form of import duties levied initially at 5 percent rising by one percent a month up to a ceiling of 17 percent by March 2005—will go ahead from Monday.

"The name of the game is repeal. It is not retaliation, not sanctions. It is repeal, and to have a WTO-compliant legislation," said EU trade commissioner Pascal Lamy, on a visit to Washington Thursday.

The WTO has ruled that the FSC law flouts global trade rules by allowing thousands of US firms, operating through subsidiaries in offshore tax havens, to benefit from reduced export taxes.

WTO arbitrators have agreed with the EU that just over $4 billion (3.4 billion euros) would constitute "appropriate countermeasures" based on the trade impact of the US policy.

The Brussels commission argues that it has given Washington long enough time and has no alternative but to impose the sanctions.

"We've been waiting for two years already," said a spokesman.

"It is quite automatic here. There's nothing we can do about it," he added.

Lamy said last week that he had no desire to take sides on the various proposals for US legislation to replace the FSC law.

Lamy said he only wanted to see the final version of the proposed law.

The House of Representatives and the Senate must find a compromise text that must then be signed by President George W. Bush and checked by the European Commission to see if it complies with WTO rules.

The FSC row is at the forefront of a slew of trade disagreements between the Europeans and the Americans.

The World Trade Organization cleared Europe last week to impose sanctions on the United States for failing to revoke a 1916 anti-dumping law declared illegal by the WTO, officials said.

In addition the European Union said it regretted a separate decision by the United States to suspend imports of cold cuts of meat and foie gras from France on health grounds.

Another dispute is brewing over the US "Byrd amendment."

This amendment allows Washington to distribute proceeds from anti-dumping tariffs to American firms that complain of damage from foreign imports.

In a warmer transatlantic development, Lamy lifted the threat of $2.2-billion trade sanctions against the United States in December last year after Bush scrapped tariffs on steel imports. *AFP*

Improved economic outlook seen boosting Tokyo stocks

TOKYO—Japanese stocks are expected to rise this week, with investors seeking retailers and other domestic-demand shares following increasing signs that an economic upturn is finally filtering down to the domestic sector.

The data earlier this month showed Japan's economy grew at its fastest pace in 13 years in the October-December quarter thanks to strong demand for Japanese electronics, cars and steel in China and the United States.

Last week's solid industrial output data added to evidence that the world's second-biggest economy is pulling out of a decade of stagnation.

Additional data showed that average spending by wage-earner households rose for a third month in January, suggesting a recovery may also be taking hold in personal consumption, the largest but weakest part of Japan's economy.

Given that, analysts said, it looks more lucrative to buy stocks dependent on domestic demand than those of exporters, whose earnings prospects could be hurt by external shocks.

One such problem has been volatility in currencies.

Some said the Nikkei average could this week test a 20-month closing high of 11,161, marked in October last year.

Others are cautious, noting the possibility of further falls in US high-tech stocks and risk of a strengthening yen if key US economic data, such as the Institute for Supply Management's report on its manufacturing index on Monday, fall short of expectations.

Thursday brings US weekly initial jobless claims, followed by the more detailed February employment report on Friday.

On Tuesday last week, the Nikkei suffered its biggest percentage loss since December, led by falls in exporter shares after a sudden rise in the yen toward 108 to the dollar.

A high yen is widely viewed as a negative for Japanese exporters by lowering dollar-based export returns and making their products less price competitive.

Mid-quarter business update by US tech bellwether Intel Corp., scheduled on Thursday, is also carefully watched as that could set a near-term direction of the Nasdaq and their Japanese counterparts, such as chip-making equipment maker Tokyo Electron Ltd., analysts said.

Last week, gains in builders, retailers and other domestic demand-led issues helped lift the Nikkei 3 percent to 11,041.92, above 11,000 for the first time since Jan. 23. . *Reuters*

Jump in business spending boosts US economic growth

NEW YORK—The US economy grew a bit more quickly than first thought at the end of last year as business investment jumped, official figures showed on Friday, in an encouraging sign for further solid growth.

A separate reading on Chicago-area business activity also provided a rare ray of hope on the employment front with a big jump in jobs, despite an overall decline in business activity.

US gross domestic product, the broadest measure of the nation's economic health, was revised upward to a 4.1-percent annual growth rate for the fourth quarter, just above the initial reading last month of 4 percent, the Commerce Department said.

That confounded forecasts of a downward revision to 3.6 percent and showed the strongest back-to-back quarters since 1984, beating even the dramatic gains of the late 1990s boom.

"Overall, the signals on growth are pretty positive. It's very clear that business investment has rebounded, but there are still questions about what's happening in the labor market," said Jim O'Sullivan, senior economist at UBS.

He said the economy is "if anything" stronger in the current quarter, with growth likely around 5 percent, which bodes well for an eventual rise in hiring.

The report helped lift the stock market, but the S&P 500 index slipped in late trade to end flat at 1,144. The bond market largely shrugged off the revisions since more recent capital spending data has been buoyant.

The fourth-quarter GDP reading was nudged higher because business spending on equipment and software was more robust than first thought and firms added to inventories at a faster pace.

"The unexpected good news in these data is the big upward revision to capital spending on equipment and software, now estimated at 15.1 percent, up from the advance 10 percent," said Ian Shepherdson, chief US economist at High Frequency Economics.

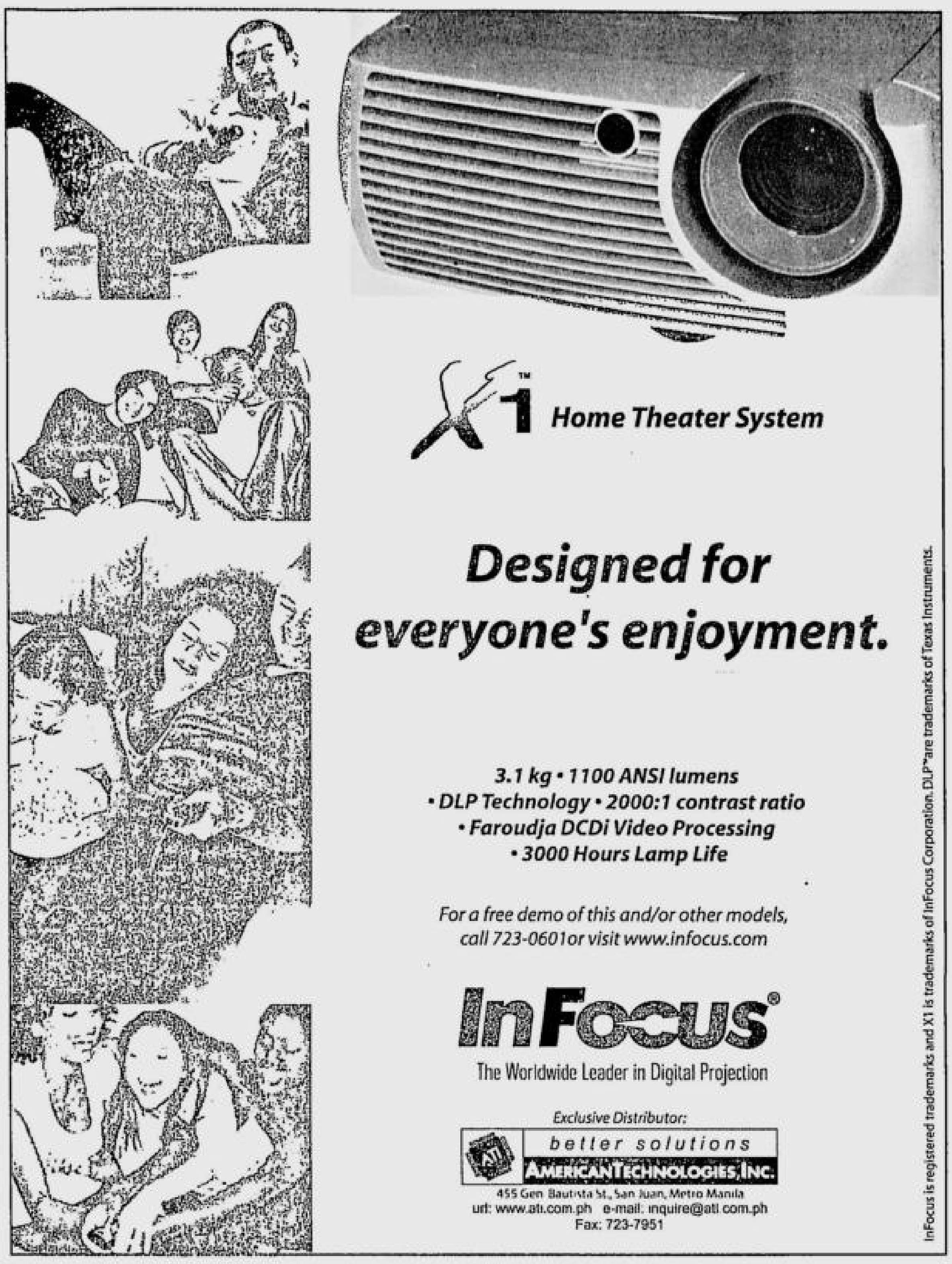
The jump in business investment reinforced expectations that capital spending will lead the economy higher this year even as consumer spending eases from last year's tax-cut fueled surge. In the fourth quarter, consumers curbed their spending on expensive durable goods, which fell 0.1 percent.

A business spending collapse pulled the economy into recession in 2001, and the turnaround has fed expectations of a sustained economic expansion.

In the fourth quarter, imports jumped at a 16.4-percent annual pace, up from an initially reported 11.3-percent rate, another reflection of solid US demand.

Helped by a weaker dollar, exports also turned in a strong performance, rising at a revised 21-percent rate, the biggest jump in seven years.

"The most recent indicators suggest that the economy is off to a strong start in 2004, and prospects for sustaining the expansion in the period ahead are good," he said. *Reuters*



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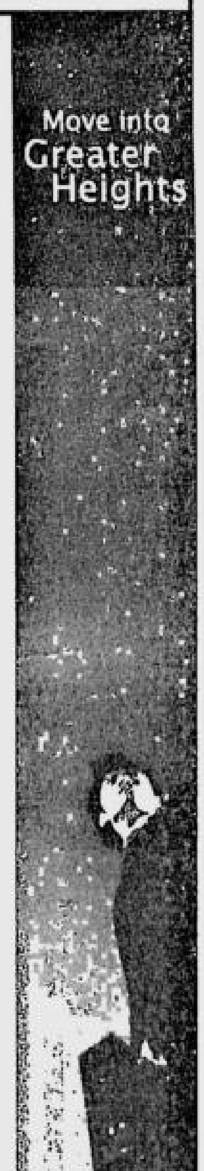

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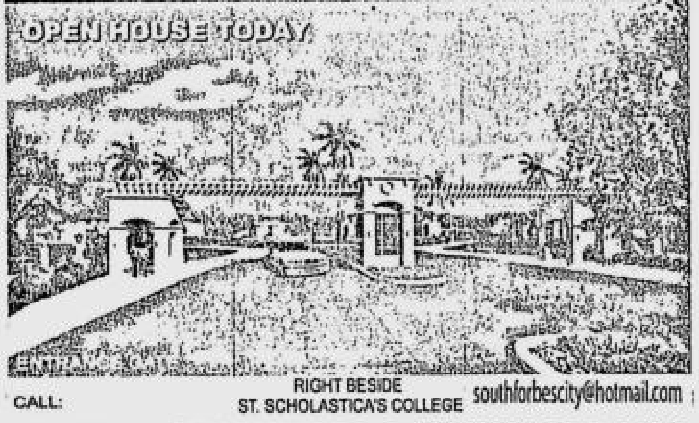

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FISHERIES ADMINISTRATIVE)
ORDER NO.________________:
Series of 2004)

SUBJECT: Establishment of Tuna Productivity Project in Davao Gulf

WHEREAS, the indiscriminate utilization of the Philippine fishing grounds has resulted to the massive depletion of fish stocks, thereby compelling the small-scale and medium-scale commercial fishing vessels to venture farther out to the international waters to fish;

WHEREAS, there is an urgent need to revive the viability of the local fishing grounds by discouraging the harvest of juvenile fish and by encouraging the practice of environmentally sound fishing methods;

WHEREAS, one of the effective fish attracting devices is the payao while the traditional handline or hook and line is found to be an environmentally sound fishing method;

WHEREAS, the small-scale and medium-scale commercial fishing boat operators of Malita, Davao del Sur and Governor Generoso, Davao Oriental have organized into a cooperative and, in order to revitalize the fishing grounds in the Southern Philippines, have embarked on a tuna fishing project where the use of "payao" and the traditional handline or hook and line fishing method shall be integrated into the Tuna Productivity Project in Davao Gulf;

NOW, THEREFORE, for and in consideration of the foregoing premises and pursuant to Sections 4 (14) and 86 of R.A. No. 8550, this order for the establishment of the Tuna Productivity Project in Davao Gulf beyond municipal waters is hereby issued for the information, implementation and compliance by all those concerned.

SECTION 1. Definition. - The terms as used in this order shall be construed as follows.

a) TPP - refers to the Tuna Productivity Project in Davao Gulf of the BFAR jointly with the cooperative of small-scale and medium-scale commercial fishing vessels using only the traditional handline or hook and line gear in catching tuna in the network of "payaos."

b) "Payao" or fish shelter - is a fish aggregating device consisting of a floating raft or drums anchored by a weighted line with suspended materials such as palm fronds which attract pelagic and schooling species of fish.

SECTION 2 Area. - There is hereby established the TPP in Davao Gulf with an area of 25,613.16 hectares or 256.16 square kilometers (14 n.m. or 25.9 km from Malita, Davao del Sur and 15 n.m. or 27.7 km. from Governor Generoso, Davao Oriental) formed by the following coordinates and reflected on the accompanying map.

Pt. 1	6°32'37" N	Pt. 5	6° 17'45" N
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Pt. 2	6°34'00" N	Pt.6	6°18'50"N
	125° 51'00" E		125° 56'45"E
Pt. 3	6° 26'45" N	Pt. 7	6° 09'30"N
	125° 50'15" E		125° 57'00"E
Pt. 4	6° 27'37" N	Pt. 8	6° 10'37" N
	125°53'15" E		126° 00'00"E

SECTION 3 Management. - The TPP shall be under the control and supervision of the project presided by the Regional Director or his designated representative of Fisheries Regional Office No. XI, Davao City, the membership of which coming from the Davao Gulf Fishermen's Cooperative and the municipal governments of Malita, Davao del Sur and Governor Generoso, Davao Oriental.

The site for the construction of payaos shall be determined upon consultation with the Philippine Coast Guard to ensure that such areas shall be away from navigational hazards.

The Davao Gulf Enforcement and Protection Alliance shall assist the TPP Management Board in implementing the applicable provisions of the fishery law within the project area, particularly in securing the "payaos" from illegal fishing, destructive elements and unwanted intrusions. Cooperative members, for their part, shall submit daily reports to the management board as to the status or condition of the "payaos."

Small-scale and medium-scale commercial fishing vessels of cooperative members with valid license using only handlines or hook and line may be issued by the Fisheries Regional Office No. XI a special permit to fish in the TPP area upon payment of an application fee of P500.00 and special permit fee in the amount of P5,000.00 per annum which shall neither be refundable nor transferable.

SECTION 4. Prohibition. - It shall be unlawful to catch fish in the TPP area by means of purse seine, ringnet, bag net, or other types of active gear other than handline or hook and line notwithstanding any special permit that may have been issued for the purpose by the Fisheries Regional Office No. XI: Provided, That the discovery of any person in the area where he has no permit or license for his fishing vessel shall constitute a prima facie evidence that he is engaged in unauthorized fishing therein.

SECTION 5 Penalty. - Violation of this order shall hold the commercial fishing boat captain or the three (3) highest officers of the boat liable to the penalty of fine equivalent to the value of the catch or ten thousand pesos (P10,000.00), whichever is higher, and imprisonment for six (6) months, confiscation of catch and fishing gear, and revocation of commercial fishing vessel and gear license.

SECTION 6 Effectivity. - This order shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette and/or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation and fifteen (15) days after its registration with the Office of the National Administrative Register.

Issued this _______ day of ________________, 2004 at Quezon City, Metro Manila, Philippines.

(SGD) LUIS P. LORENZO, JR.
Secretary

Recommended by:

(SGD) MALCOLM I. SARMIENTO, JR.
Director
Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources

(SGD) CESAR M. DRILON, JR.
Undersecretary for Fisheries and Livestock, DA
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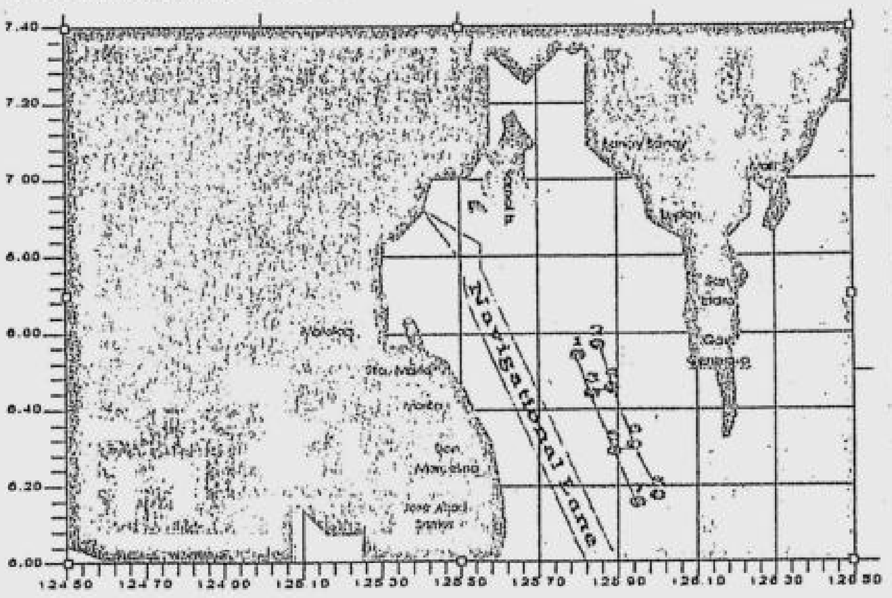

Figure 1- Location of the Tuna Productivity Project in Davao Gulf.

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St. Jude, worker of miracles, helper for the helpless, pray for us.

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DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL DEFENSE
GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City
Telefax Nr 421-2327; 911-6001 Loc 6592
website: www.afp.mil.ph
e-mail: cosb.j9@afp.mil.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Armed Forces of the Philippines invites all interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid in the 1-Stage bid process for the Upgrade of Two (2) Patrol Killer Medium (PKM)/Wildcat Class Gunboats of the Philippine Navy, which shall be done in the Republic of Korea (ROK) or in the Philippines. It has an approved budget of Two Hundred Eighty-eight Million Pesos (Php 288,000,000.00), chargeable against the AFP Modernization Program CY 2002 funds.

Only bids from ROK and/or Filipino-owned shipbuilding/ship repair companies shall be entertained.

The 1st stage bid documents shall only be available for issuance starting March 1 until March 28, 2004 during office hours at the BAC Secretariat, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Capability, Materiel and Technology Development, J9, GHQ, AFP, 3rd Floor, Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo (CGEA), Quezon City. The bid documents shall be issued upon payment of a registration fee amounting to Twenty-eight Thousand and Eight Hundred Pesos (Php 28,800.00), which is not refundable. The form of payment shall be in cash or cashier's check in favor of the AFP Modernization Act Trust Fund.

A Special Power of Attorney, issued by the prospective bidder, authorizing its representative to purchase the 1st stage bid documents in its behalf, shall be required before issuance of said documents.

A Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled on **March 15, 2004 at 09:00 a.m.** (local time) at the **Silid Panday Pira, 1st Floor, Bulwagang Mabini, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City.** Bidders may submit their query/ies, if any, in writing to the BAC Secretariat not later than seven (7) working days prior to the Pre-Bid Conference.

The Bidder shall be allowed to inspect the two (2) PKM gunboats at the ROK Navy Shipyard Chin Hae Naval Base in Busan, ROK upon purchase of bid documents until the deadline of submission of the bids, and upon prior request from the Camp Commander of Chin Hae Naval Base. All bidders who cannot afford to send an Inspection Team to ROK may get all available data also at J9, GHQ, CGEA.

Deadline for submission of bids is on **March 29, 2004 at 9:00 a.m.** (local time) and followed by the Opening of Bids at 9:30 AM at the Silid Panday Pira.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines reserves the right to reject any or all bids based on the grounds for disqualification specified in RA 9184 without assuming any obligation whatsoever for expenses or losses that may be incurred by the bidder in the preparation of the bid.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. JOSE N. FERRER, JR.**
Chairman, DND-BAC

(PDI - March 1 & 8, 2004)

APOLOGIES

PRECIOUS ISLAND MARKETING AND/OR ANITA LIM APOLOGIZES FOR SELLING COUNTERFEIT / PIRATED PLAYSTATION GAME PRODUCTS

I apologize to **Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.**, through its local counsel Bengzon Negre Untalan Intellectual Property Attorneys, to my customers and the Filipino public for selling and renting out pirated PlayStation® game products.

By so doing, I have contravened the Intellectual Property Code (R.A. 8293) and infringed upon the copyrights and trademarks of **Sony Computer Entertainment, Inc.**

I recognize that under R.A. 8293, it is a violation of copyright to engage in, distribute and/or authorize any unlicensed reproduction of computer programs including computer games. Under the said law, copyright infringement is punishable by *imprisonment* ranging from 1 to 9 years plus a *fine* ranging from P50,000 to P1,500,000.

I thank **Sony Computer Entertainment, Inc.** for the opportunity given to me to reform. We promise not to commit these infringement again.

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March 29 (Monday)
Reflections for the Working Soul:
Living our Spiritual Values at Work

Resource person:
Teresa Reyes Tunay
Blue Collar Magazine editor-in-chief and columnist in Philippine Daily Inquirer's Sunday People at Work writing Reflections for the Working Soul

March 30 (Tuesday)
Reflections for the Organizational Soul
Building a Spiritual Community at Work

Resource person:
Jocelyn Marie Fallarme Neri
Organizational Development and Training Consultant, Psychotherapist and Pranic Healer and currently working as Senior Training Manager in an IT company

March 31 (Wednesday)
Reflections for the Leader's Soul
Enhancing SQ (Spiritual Intelligence) in Leadership

Resource person:
Andre San Agustin, Ph.D.
Master Trainer, Inner Excellence Seminars and former professor in various US universities (Univ. of Arizona, Manhattan College, Iona College New York, Univ. of San Francisco, Univ. of San Diego) and in Asian Institute of Management.

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Corazon Glorioso Cochico

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord
on 28 February 2004 at the age of 75.

Her bereaved brothers **Emmanuel, Jose Jr., Fernando** and **Antonio**, sisters-in-law, nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews, other relatives and friends request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Holy Trinity Chapel, Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City.

Interment will be held on Wednesday, 3 March 2004 after the celebration of Holy Mass at 11:00 a.m.

Engr. RICARDO HERRMANN CONCEPCION

Of Maybunga, Pasig City
and Los Angeles, California

Peacefully joined our Lord
on February 28, 2004 at the age of 78.

His wife **Dolores**; children **Malou** and **Raul**, **Marie** and **Erwin**; grandchildren **Catherine**, **Christine**, **Cassandra**, **Patricia**, and **Patrick**; brothers and sisters **Remedios** (†), **Rosalina**, **Vicente Jr.**, **Lydia**, **Tomas**, and **Corazon**; nephews and nieces and other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Arlington East The Garden Chapels, 1354 C. Raymundo Ave. cor. Mercedes Avenue, San Miguel, Pasig City.

Interment will be announced later.

She is Lovingly
Remembered
on her First Death Anniversary

RUBY FLORES PARAS

March 15, 1927 - March 1, 2003

Husband **Atty. Salvador D. Paras**; children **Drs. Gerry** and **Claudette**, **Robert** and **Marite** and **Anthony** and **Marissa**; sister **Flotilda Castro** and grandchildren request relatives and friends to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Holy Masses will be offered at the following churches.

1. Our Lady of Loreto Parish (whole day) 6:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
   Bustillos, Sampaloc, Manila
2. St. Anthony's Shrine .... 6:15 a.m.
   Bustillos, Sampaloc, Manila
3. St. Jude Archdiocesan .... 6:30 a.m.
   420 J. P. Laurel St., San Miguel, Manila
4. Sta. Cruz Church .... 6:30 a.m.
   Sta. Cruz, Manila
5. Immaculate Conception Parish .... 6:00 a.m.
   Concepcion, Tarlac
6. St. Joseph Church .... 8:00 a.m.
   Mt. View, California, USA
7. Rossi Chapel, Jesus Retreat House .... 6:30 a.m.
   Los Altos, California, USA
8. St. Nicolas Church .... 8:00 a.m.
   Los Altos, California, USA
9. Cathedral Basilica of St. Joseph .... 12:00 noon
   San Jose, California, USA

"...absent with the body
to be present with the Lord."
— 2 Corinthians 5:8

All the pain and grief is over
Every restless tossing passed;
I am now at peace forever,
Safely home in Heaven at last.

Our Dearly Beloved

Felisa "Pich" Encarnacion-Nolasco

(December 29, 1926 - February 28, 2004)

of Cavite City and St. Ignatius Village, Q.C.
Class of 1950, UP College of Pharmacy

Peacefully joined her Cretor at the age of 77.

Her devoted husband **Dr. Pablo F. Nolasco**, loving children **Ronnie** and **Cora**, **Ray** and **Joji Macatangay**, **Eddie** and **Bebot**; grandchildren **Joey**, **Eric**, **Joanna** and **Melissa**, request the pious reader to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her mortal remains lie in state at the Community Chapel of St. Ignatius Village, Quezon City.

Interment will follow immediately after Holy Mass and Services on March 2, 2004.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

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❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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Republic of the Philippines
CARAGA Region
Province of Agusan del Norte
Municipality of Cabadbaran

INVITATION FOR PREQUALIFICATION

Date: February 29, 2004
Contract No.: 002-04 MPM
Loan No.: 1843-PHI

1. The Municipality of Cabadbaran, Agusan del Norte, Philippines, has received a loan from the Asian Development Bank, hereinafter referred to as ADB, thru the Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP), under the Mindanao Basic Urban Services Sector Project (MBUSSP) of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) towards the cost of the construction of Cabadbaran Public Market and intends to apply a portion of the proceeds of this loan to eligible payment under the contract for which this Invitation for Prequalification is issued.
2. The Municipality of Cabadbaran, Agusan del Norte, Philippines, hereinafter referred to as "the Employer," intends to prequalify contractors for the construction of Cabadbaran Public Market with the following components:
   a) Architectural c) Sanitary and Plumbing e) Site Development
   b) Structural d) Electrical and Mechanical Works
3. It is expected that Invitations to Bid will be made available on April 16, 2004.
4. Interested eligible Applicants may obtain further information and secure Prequalification Document at the address below or by calling tel. nos. (085) 8181120 or 0920-8158712, from February 29, 2004 to March 30, 2004.

   ENGR. LUDIVINA M. GAID
   The BAC Secretariat
   Municipal Hall, Cabadbaran, Agusan del Norte, Philippines

5. The Prequalification Documents, in the English language, shall be submitted by interested Applicants with a written application to the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P1500.00. The method of payment will be in cash. No liability will be accepted for loss or late delivery.

   ENGR. ERNESTO A. MORTOLA
   BAC-Chairman
   Municipal Hall, Cabadbaran, Agusan del Norte, Philippines

6. Applications must be delivered at the above address before **March 31, 2004** at 12:00 noon. The Employer reserves the right to accept or reject late applications.
7. The Employer will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by Applicants in connection with the preparation or delivery of their applications.
8. The Employer will notify all Applicants in writing of the names of those Applicants who have been prequalified.

(Sgd.) **ENGR. ERNESTO A. MORTOLA**
Chairman, BAC

(PDI - March 1 2004)

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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
NATIONAL CAPITAL JUDICIAL REGION
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT
MANDALUYONG CITY
BRANCH 214

IN THE MATTER OF: THE CORPORATE REHABILITATION OF UNIVERSAL RIGHTFIELD PROPERTY HOLDINGS, INCORPORATED PURSUANT TO THE INTERIM RULES OF PROCEDURE ON CORPORATE REHABILITATION (A.M. NO. 00-8-10-SC)

SEC CASE NO. MC-03-080

D.M. CONSUNJI, INC.,
Petitioner,
x---x

ORDER

This is a creditor-initiated verified petition for rehabilitation filed by the above-named petitioner pursuant to Rule 4, Section 1 of the Interim Rules of Procedure on Corporate Rehabilitation (Interim Rules)

Briefly, petitioner seeks the rehabilitation of Universal Property Holdings, Inc. (URPHI) through this creditor initiated petition and as a holder of more than twenty five percent (25%) of the outstanding liabilities of the latter incurred in the construction and engineering projects undertaken by petitioner for URPHI, namely: Pioneer Highlands Project (Pioneer Highlands II) and Dansalan Gardens II Project. Of the total liabilities of URPHI to all its creditors amounting to Php 1,396.85 Million, petitioner holds Thirty Six percent (36%) or Php 480.50 Million as of September 30, 2003. Billing statements and demands for payment have been made by petitioner to URPHI in the past and thereafter but the latter has failed to fully settle its obligations due to its cashflow shortfall.

Petitioner contends that the rehabilitation of URPHI will greatly and primarily benefit all the creditors of the latter as it will provide URPHI the opportunity to pay its liabilities to them over a period of time. The proposed rehabilitation plan of Universal Rightfield Property Holdings, Incorporated (URPHI) proposes that the latter's financial indebtedness of approximately Php 1,396.85 Million be reduced through modes of *dacion en pago* arrangement as it will accelerate payments of the debts and lessen the pressure for debt servicing, by developing real property currently in the land bank of URPHI into value-added property, including joint venture undertakings with thirt-party developers/financiers, and recapitalization. The rehabilitation plan also calls for an initial funding of Php150 Million to jumpstart development costs of the Cabuyao property development, that URPHI is projected to be able to repay the significantly reduced amount of Php 1,396.85 Million over a period of ten (10) years which repayment term is not unusual throughout Asia in restructurings of this size and where security is over the operational assets of the company; and that, if approved and implemented, the rehabilitation plan would have the following beneficial effects, viz: a) URPHI, its customers and suppliers will be able to carry on business in the ordinary course without the imminent threat of liquidation by creditors enforcing debts that are due and payable which obligations would be replaced by an orderly retirement of debt on a sustainable basis over 10 years. b) The right of bank creditors that prove that they have a valid security and enforceable interest will be unaffected by the rehabilitation plan, as their security interest will remain in effect and can be enforced should URPHI default on its restructured financial indebtedness and go into liquidation. c) The terms of repayment to all financial creditors will be *pari passu* in accordance with Asian Restructuring Practice. d) The URPHI Group will continue to provide its development construction services expertise, and fulfill its obligations to the public as a co-developer in affordable housing to the public, and e) Preservation of jobs in the company and downstream beneficiaries. Consequently, petitioner prays for the immediate issuance of a Stay Order pending proceedings before this court and the appointment of a rehabilitation receiver.

WHEREFORE, finding the Petition sufficient in form and substance, a Stay Order pursuant to Rule 4, Section 6 of the Interim Rules of Procedure on Corporate Rehabilitation is hereby issued, as follows:

(a) Staying enforcement of all claims, whether for money or otherwise and whether such enforcement is by Court action or otherwise against URPHI, its guarantors and sureties not solidarily liable with it including the staying of proceedings of collection cases filed against it, and the staying of the enforcement/implementation of application/s for extra-judicial foreclosure sale/s and actual foreclosure sale/s, if any, against the real and personal properties of URPHI;
(b) Prohibiting URPHI from selling, encumbering, transferring or disposing in any manner any of its properties, except in the ordinary course of business;
(c) Prohibiting URPHI from making any payment of its liabilities outstanding as at the date of filing of the Petition (January 30, 2004);
(d) Prohibiting the suppliers of goods or services of URPHI from withholding supply of goods and services in the course of business for as long as URPHI makes payments for the services and goods supplied after the issuance of this Stay Order, and,
(e) Directing the payment in full of all administrative-expenses incurred after the issuance of this Stay Order.

Attorney Monico V. Jacob, with address at CEO, Inc. c/o STI 7th Floor Philippine First Bldg., 6764 Ayala Avenue, Makati City is appointed rehabilitation receiver, who shall be considered an officer of the court and who shall have the powers, duties and functions as provided in Section 14, Rule 4 of the aforecited Interim Rules. He can assume the position upon taking an oath and after posting a bond in the amount of Two Million Pesos (Php 2,000,000.00) executed in favor of URPHI, to guarantee that he will faithfully discharge his duties as trustee of the assets of the debtor and the Orders of this Court. The petitioner is directed to immediately serve a copy of this Stay Order upon the rehabilitation receiver, Atty. Monico V. Jacob, who shall manifest his acceptance or non-acceptance of his appointment not later than ten (10) days from receipt hereof.

The initial hearing of the Petition is hereby set on March 29, 2004 at 8:30 o'clock in the morning at the Session Room of this court located at the Ground Floor of the Justice Hall, Mandaluyong City Hall Compound, Maysilo, Boni Avenue, Mandaluyong City. All creditors and all interested parties (including the Securities and Exchange Commission) are directed to file and serve on the petitioner their verified comment on or opposition to the Petition, with supporting affidavits and documents, not later than ten (10) days before the date of the initial hearing. Within such time as to enable all creditors and interested parties to file their comment on, or opposition to the Petition and to prepare them for the initial hearing of the petition, they are further directed to secure from this Court copies of the Petition and its annexes.

The petitioner is further more directed to publish this Stay Order at the Philippine Daily Inquirer, and one other newspaper of general circulation in the Philippines with widespread circulation in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao if it is a newspaper other than the herein named newspaper chosen by raffle, once a week for two (2) consecutive weeks, with the last publication effected at least three (3) weeks prior to the date of initial hearing as setforth above.

SO ORDERED.

Mandaluyong City
17 February 2004

(Sgd.) EDWIN D. SORONGON
Judge

(PDI—March 1 & 8, 2004)

More Classifieds on page A23

Office of the President
Republic of the Philippines
CLARK DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Clark Special Economic Zone, Pampanga

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Clark Development Corporation (CDC) through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites interested providers for the hereunder listed project:

"LEASE OF A DEDICATED, UNINTERRUPTED AND UNLIMITED INTERNET ACCESS AND CONNECTION WITH A MINIMUM BANDWIDTH OF 1024 Kbps USING WIRED TECHNOLOGY"

The project calls for all Internet Service Providers (ISPs) with existing facilities and three (3) years experience as an ISP and NTC Registration as Value Added Provider or any equivalent government license for an ISP to provide the lease of a dedicated, uninterruptible, and unlimited Internet access and connection with a minimum bandwidth of 1024 kbps using wired technology. The winning bidder shall deliver and complete connection of said service within fourteen (14) calendar days from the receipt of the Notice to Proceed from CDC.

The bidding activity will be governed by Republic Act 9184 and its implementing rules on the eligibility checking and evaluation of bids using the non-discretionary pass/fail criteria.

Issuance of the Bidding Documents will be on **February 24, 2004 to March 8, 2004** at BAC Secretariat, 3rd Floor, Bldg. 2127 upon payment of non-refundable fee of **Php 5,000.00**.

The approved budget of the contract is One Million Nine Hundred Thirty One Thousand Four Hundred Pesos (**P 1,931,400.00**).

Site Inspection and Pre-bid conference will be on **March 11, 2004 at 8:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.** respectively.

CDC reserves the right to reject any or all applications on all bids without offering any reason, waive any formality, informality and/or defect and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the government, nor does CDC guarantee that an award will be made.

Submission and opening of bids shall be on **March 23, 2004 at 10:00 a.m.** at the OTS Conference Room, Bldg. 2125, CDC Corporate Offices, E. Quirino St., Clark Field, Pampanga.

The award of the contract shall be after the election ban (March 26, 2004 to May 9, 2004) pursuant to Section 261 of the Omnibus Election Code (Batas Pambansa Blg. 881).

A copy of this invitation maybe viewed at www.clark.com.ph and the E-GPS.

All inquiries and letters shall be addressed to:

The BAC Secretariat
Clark Development Corporation
3rd Floor, Bldg. 2127, E. Quirino Avenue,
CSEZ, Clark Field, Pampanga
bacsecretariat@clark.com.ph
Telefax: (45) 599-9000 local 542

(Sgd.) **ROMEO N. DYOCO, JR.**
Chairman
Bids and Award Committee

(PDI - Feb 23 & March 1 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Antique
MUNICIPALITY OF BUGASONG
-oOo-
OFFICE OF THE BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Municipality of Bugasong, Antique invites interested bidders to pre-qualify and to cast sealed bids for the delivery of various medicines details of which is posted at the Bulletin Board in the municipality reserved for the purpose with approved budget of Php1,000,000.00. The source of fund is the Priority Development Assistance Fund (RA 9026) of Senator Loren Legarda Leviste.

Interested parties may secure bid documents and eligibility requirements from the BAC SECRETARIAT, Office of the Municipal Treasurer, Bugasong, Antique.

The particulars of the bidding are as follows, viz.:

Issuance of Bid Documents	February 9 to 24, 2004
Opening/Submission of Bids	February 25, 2004/10:00 a.m.

Bidders shall submit on the date of the Opening/Submission of Bids two (2) sealed envelopes containing: (1) Checklist of Eligibility Requirements, Bid Security, its forms, amount and validity period, certification of the supplier/s that he/they has/have not been blacklisted, etc. and (2) Financial Proposal.

The BAC concerned reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason whatsoever, to waive any defects therein and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most responsive.

(Sgd.) GILSON R. BANTOLO
Chairperson
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI—Feb. 25 & March 1, 2004)

Globe, ABS-CBN avert row over noontime show promo

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

MOBILE phone operator Globe Telecom and ABS-CBN Channel 2 have averted a potential dispute regarding a segment on the latter's television noontime show "Magandang Tanghali Bayan: Ang Saya Saya" called "Libreng Load."

Globe has retracted a complaint it filed last week with the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) after broadcasting firm ABS-CBN agreed to exclude Globe from its noontime show promo involving the prepaid top-up game.

Globe filed the complaint Tuesday last week, so the NTC scheduled a meeting Thursday last week to help resolve the dispute between the two companies.

The meeting, however, never took place as it was deemed no longer necessary after both parties came to an agreement at around 6 p.m. Tuesday.

In an interview, lawyer Rodolfo Salalima, senior vice president of corporate and regulatory affairs of Globe, said that the complaint was withdrawn due to this agreement.

"It is a concern for both companies. So we addressed the concern even before it turned into a problem," Salalima said.

The "Libreng Load" segment features a game that involves viewers racing to top-up for free the prepaid mobile accounts of Globe, Smart and Sun Cellular subscribers. This is done after the hosts of the noontime show flash on camera a scratched prepaid card number from any of the three providers.

The game is open to all viewers of the noontime show, thus people raced to text in the flashed number, causing network congestions on cellular phone networks.

In a separate interview, Anna de Silva Singson, vice president for corporate marketing of Globe, also confirmed the settlement between ABS-CBN and Globe.

"If you watch the noontime show program, the promo on Globe has been stopped," Singson said.

Interestingly, the noontime show did not totally stop the free top-up promo but only excluded Globe from the game. The game was still giving out free top-ups for Talk and Text and Sun Cellular subscribers.

Commenting on this development, an official of a mobile phone operator who declined to be identified said that Globe's complaint was forthcoming because the network traffic the game was creating was more of a nuisance than a source of revenue for the operator.

"Only one subscriber would be able to get that free top-up. All other individuals unable to get the free top-up are rejected by the network," the official added.

He said that the game is causing unnecessary traffic on the network of the operators, and yet the operators are not earning revenue from it.

In short, network traffic without revenue is just pure nuisance—or even closely related to a denial-of-service attack in the realm of the Internet. A denial-of-service attack is described as a flood of data coming from various sources targeting one Internet address. This kind of attack causes the Internet to slow down.

A Globe executive who declined to be named said that the operator traced the "spiking" of their network traffic to the noontime show's promo as early as last week.

Globe officials then urged ABS-CBN to stop the promo due to network problems the promo could create. However, Globe's plea fell on deaf ears until they filed the complaint at the NTC, the executive said.

During the meeting at the NTC, Globe pointed out that its network recorded around 8 million text requests at one point, as viewers of the noontime show raced to get the free top-up.

The show runs from 12 noon to 2 p.m. every day, thus ABS-CBN argued that Globe's figures might be bloated. Globe, however, insisted that some viewers were still sending text requests to its network even after the show had ended.

"Apparently, ABS-CBN was not announcing to viewers that the free top-up has already been won," NTC deputy commissioner Jorge Sarmiento said.

Sarmiento also advised ABS-CBN to open discussions with mobile phone operators Smart and Sun to avoid complaints similar to that of Globe.

"While the other operators have not filed a complaint, we have instructed ABS-CBN to talk to them to prevent problems from happening. We want them to be more proactive," Sarmiento said.

The NTC also raised the concern that other television shows might copy ABS-CBN's game promo, which would again translate to more network problems for local mobile phone operators.

Earlier, ABS-CBN said in a statement that the ongoing promotions of their television noontime show "does not call for subscribers to do more than what the prepaid services of (local cellular mobile phone operators) encourage their respective subscribers to do."

Ma. Lourdes Lilia Manalastas, vice president for government, corporate affairs and public affairs of ABS-CBN, said that "the capacity of the (operators') systems to handle the traffic that passes through their network is the sole concern and responsibility of the said companies."

Manalastas said that if there were any problems with the ability of operator's networks to handle surges in network traffic, they should have been addressed by the operators.

But if Smart and Sun also raise concerns over the network traffic its game promo is causing, Manalastas said that ABS-CBN might totally stop it from airing.

Infotech got in touch with Smart and Sun but officials were unavailable for comment.

Makati school district now has broadband and wireless access

MERIDIAN Telekoms has successfully deployed a broadband wireless Internet network for the Makati School System. This makes Makati City the first local public school district to go 100 percent online.

Makati City has launched a program that would open a whole new world of learning for hundreds of students and teachers by promoting the use of the Internet as a medium for academic activities.

"We would like to give Makati public schools the opportunity to access the vast information the Internet can offer," Makati schools superintendent Elena Ruiz said. "Internet connectivity is in fact the necessary infrastructure that will support our third computerization program which is the implementation of an Internet-enriched curriculum."

Ruiz added that in Makati, they have three programs focusing along computerization. First is a massive computer literacy program. Second is the use of computer-aided instructions in the classroom where three to six classrooms per school will have elevation sets and computers to be used for instructional purposes. Third is the development of an Internet-enriched curriculum.

No longer isolated from the information superhighway, the project is expected to equip Makati's public school students for the country's foray into the information revolution and inspire them to pursue careers in information technology.

Meridian Telekoms is the first Internet telecommunications company to provide fixed wireless broadband and connections to large corporations and SMEs in the Philippines.

Among other wired and wireless service providers, Meridian was awarded the school district project because of its reliability and quick deployment. The project required broadband connections for all 36 schools in the district and needed them installed in less than 30 days.

Without complicated setups, Meridian installed a wireless access antenna in each school. This antenna connects to a computer that acts as a server that will provide Internet access initially to the faculty, and then eventually to the students for their research activities.

Namfrel exec warns Comelec against partial automation

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

THE COMMISSION on Elections (Comelec) can be held in contempt of court if the poll body insists on using even on a limited scale computers of an information technology firm whose contract with the poll body was nullified by the Supreme Court, an official of the National Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) told Infotech.

"We're definitely filing a case of contempt of court if they push through with their plan," said Augusto Lagman, technology consultant to Namfrel, referring to the Comelec plan to avail of the alleged offer of Mega Pacific eSolutions Inc. to use for free its equipment for the May elections. The same equipment are the ones involved in the controversial voided bid with the Comelec.

Lagman was among the petitioners who asked the Supreme Court to void the poll automation contract between the Comelec and Mega Pacific eSolutions Inc. due to alleged irregularities in the bidding process.

Once the Comelec issues an en banc resolution indicating its plan to continue with the partial implementation of the automated counting and canvassing of votes in select areas in the country, the petitioners would go to the Supreme Court, Lagman warned.

In an earlier interview, Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos said that the poll body was planning automated polls in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, the National Capital Region and some parts of the Visayas.

He said the Comelec would be using some of the counting machines bought from Mega Pacific eSolutions.

Comelec Commissioner Resurreccion Borra had said that the Supreme Court nullified the contract, but did not exactly bar the poll body from using the machines.

LAGMAN

Reports also said that Mega Pacific eSolutions has agreed to let the Comelec use the counting machines "for free."

Lagman proposed that the Comelec could use the counting machines on the condition that it first recover the P1.1 billion of taxpayers' money it had already spent in the procurement of more than 1,900 machines. The entire contract was worth P1.3 billion.

Lagman added that allowing the Comelec to use the counting machines would also weaken government plans to recover the payment from Mega Pacific eSolutions.

"The Comelec might later say that they don't need to recover the money because government has already used it for the May elections," Lagman said.

He urged the Comelec to focus on recovering the money instead of insisting on a partial automation during the elections.

Microsoft . . .

From page B16

which come with making legitimate purchases will have to be communicated.

"The second is enforcement," he said. "Government has a big role to play in the enforcement angle. We can join all the software associations we want and endorse the investigation of establishments involved in the piracy of our products, but at the end of the day the enforcement will fall in the hands of the government body tasked to do just that."

The Optical Media Law would transform the Videogram Regulatory Board into an Optical Media Board. It would also institutionalize an internationally accepted system identification code, which would trace the source of all optical media mastered, manufactured or replicated by any establishment. This code would be embedded into the optical media.

The law imposes stiffer penalties on establishments caught violating the provisions of this measure.

"That's why any law leading to the protection of IP is always welcome," Mirchandani said.

Applying borders to text, paragraphs in MS Word

POWERTIPS

By Jerry Liao

WANT to draw attention to a particular section of your Microsoft Word document? Add some borders to it. Here's how:

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5) You can also choose the style, color and width of the border.
6) Click on "OK.."

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RP stands out with mobile 'P2P' reloading

A FILIPINO company is strengthening the country's reputation as a hub for pioneering new wireless applications through "m-commerce" or mobile commerce.

When Manila-based Paysetter International's peer-to-peer (P2P) reloading application was released, implications of how the service can transform the way people transact commerce immediately became clear.

Launched in January 2004, the P2P application—adopted by Globe Telecom and dubbed "Share-A-Load"—enabled subscribers of Globe to send each other (prepaid to prepaid, postpaid to prepaid) load credits in denominations ranging from P5 to P500. A transfer is made by simply typing the amount and sending it as a text message to the intended recipient's phone number, preceded by "2." Example, 29179000005.

For subsequent load transfers, texting a PIN together with the amount protects one against unauthorized loading.

Simple enough.

But the implication is that the same platform today, enables the fastest, safest and most flexible medium for true m-commerce with call credits or "load" acting as a natural currency. "Share-a-Loading" among friends, parents rationing load credits to their dependents and load bartering for small goods are now possible.

The app has been described as revolutionary, in the most basic sense, a new way of doing something, and with a utility that is also universal.

Company sources say Paysetter is now geared for an international rollout of this product, with Asian and European carriers who have seen the platform's applicability to their markets.

The application, a world first, employs processes patented by Filipino wireless applications developers.

One of these patents has to do with suffixing SMS short codes, a process that can make SMS very interactive. The process also enables unique SMS transactions to be tracked. A second process is also the subject of global patents already filed by Filipinos and currently licensed to Globe Telecom in the Philippines—the use of numeric keywords (example "5") to determine a corresponding tariff to be charged the subscriber (in this case the Five Peso load he is crediting someone else, plus the P1 transaction cost.

The processes combined for the most intuitive peer-to-peer reloading application set to be a case study at the next GSM World Congress.

PaySetter International Inc. was founded in 2001 precisely for the development of wireless payment applications. The company was the first to allow the secure coupling of GSM subscriber accounts to user-specified accounts like pre-paid cards, checking and savings accounts, ATMs and credit cards.

PaySetter has previously enabled money transmission via SMS, bills payment for goods and services from GSM handsets, remote reloading on the mobile phone, cross-border remittance transfers and even donations through text messaging.

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Spam becoming more than just a nuisance

By Erwin Lemuel G. Oliva

UNSOLICITED or unwanted electronic mail, more popularly known on the Internet as "spam," is no longer just a nuisance but is now a growing security threat among organizations, anti-virus firm Sophos said.

Traditionally, spam contains promotions of products or services, as well as sexually explicit advertising of adult material and "toys." Most people see it as the technological equivalent or modern-day incarnation of pesky telemarketers.

However, in the last few months, anti-virus writers and hackers have been using spam techniques to attack computer networks, according to Charles Cousins, managing director of Sophos Anti-virus Asia during a briefing in Manila.

Aside from being a mere nuisance, spam is now also being used to launch viruses, Cousins added.

Cousins cited the Mimail worm, which used infected personal computers to knock out anti-spam websites. This also pointed to evidence that spammers were colluding with virus writers in what could become a new and dangerous partnership for cyberterrorism.

Trojan viruses are also increasingly being used to steal information from infected personal computers. In turn, this information is used by spammers to send unsolicited e-mail, Cousins said.

"At least 30 percent of spam are sent from hijacked PCs," added Cousins.

A Radicati report indicated that 45 percent of the 15 billion e-mail messages received by various organizations every day are spam. The report said the volume of spam would reach 75 percent of 55 billion e-mail messages received by organizations by 2007.

"Spam is increasingly becoming the No. 2 security threat in the US, next to viruses," Cousins said, citing another report.

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Editor Leo Magno

Microsoft Asia-Pac prexy says optical media law a 1st step

By Leo Magno

THE OPTICAL Media Law which was recently signed by President Macapagal-Arroyo may not necessarily address the problem of business software piracy but is still an important first step toward that goal, according to the Asia-Pacific president of Microsoft Corp.

Although the primary media targeted by the Optical Media Law are music and movies encoded into CDs and DVDs, Microsoft Asia-Pacific president Sanjay Mirchandani said this is a good first step toward the protection of intellectual property (IP).

"At the end of the day, (the law) is still significant for the IP ecosystem of the country," said Mirchandani in an interview with Infotech. The newly appointed Asia-Pacific president was in town recently to meet with Microsoft partners in the Philippines.

"At this point anything would help. This is part of the process, part of the evolution of IP recognition," he said.

The Optical Media Law has been criticized for being biased toward piracy in the entertainment industry, specifically audio and video products on CDs and DVDs. The law aims to address the issue of piracy by regulating the medium used to distribute pirated content illegally. Similar to laws passed in other countries, the Optical Media Law would institute means to regulate the manufacture, mastering and replication of optical media in the Philippines.

The region Mirchandani handles—which includes the Philippines, Korea, India, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, Australia and New Zealand—has one of the biggest piracy rates in the world. In the United States, piracy rate is at 25 percent. Worldwide, it is at 40 percent. This translates to annual losses of about $1.7 billion for Microsoft. The company is expected to earn revenues of between $35.6 and $35.9 billion for its fiscal year ending June 30.

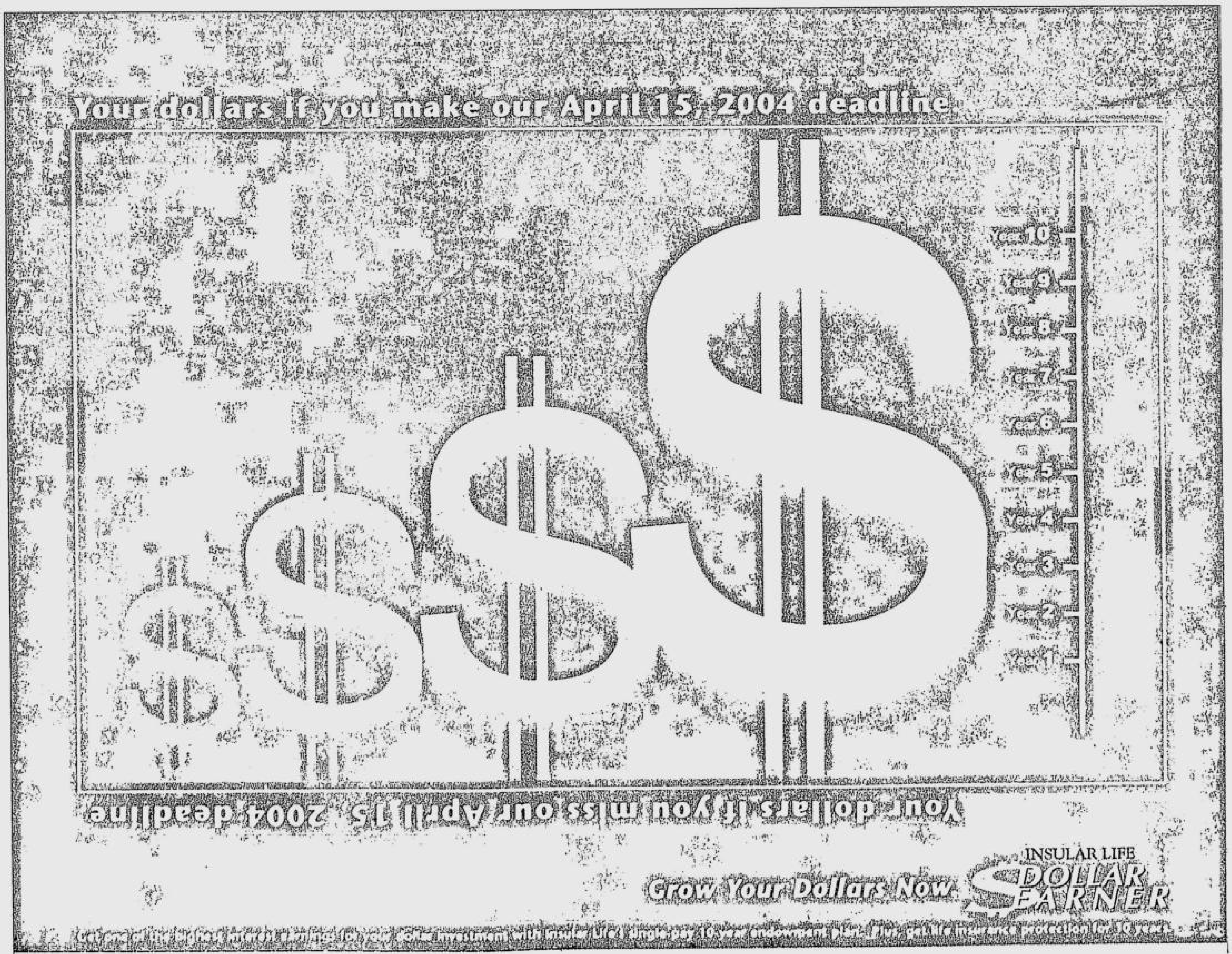
MIRCHANDANI

The solution to software piracy, according Mirchandani, is two-pronged.

"The first step is education," he said. "We have to know how the market is evolving and how IT needs are shifting. Then we have to inform the public about the benefits of legitimate software."

Mirchandani said users have to be educated about what they get and the big price they have to pay if they don't purchase original software. The difference and the benefits

MICROSOFT/B15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BASED ON INTERNATIONAL SURVEY

RP has second most number of women in management

THE PHILIPPINES has the second highest number of women occupying management posts in businesses.

This was based on findings of the Grant Thornton International Business Owners Survey (IBOS).

The findings reveal that although 59 percent of businesses globally include women in senior management positions, they occupy less than a fifth (19 percent) of the senior management posts available.

IBOS is a survey of some 6900 medium sized businesses from 26 countries worldwide.

Russia has the highest proportion (89 percent) of companies where women occupy a management role, followed by the Philippines (85 percent).

Three quarters of businesses in the United States, Mexico, and South Africa (each 75 percent) and Hong Kong (74 percent) have women in management positions.

Bottom of the pack are The Netherlands and Pakistan (both 27 percent), Japan (29 percent), and Germany (33 percent).

While six in 10 of the companies surveyed include at least one woman in a senior management position, what is particularly interesting is how little women have penetrated the overall ranks of senior managers.

Russia is the only country to approach equal numbers, with 42 percent of management posts held by women, followed by the Philippines at 39 percent.

It is striking in the US, for example, that although 75 percent of businesses employ women in senior management positions, women hold a mere 20 percent of total senior jobs.

At the other end of the scale, Japan and the Netherlands have the lowest results on both counts. In Japan a mere 8 percent of the senior management are women, whereas in the Netherlands the figure is marginally better at 9 percent.

Commenting on the results, Greg Navarro of Punongbayan & Araullo (P&A), member firm of Grant Thornton in the Philippines, said: "Analyzing the results requires a certain amount of caution due to cultural differences. In countries such as the Philippines, where women's rights have never been an issue or have ceased being one, where religious beliefs do not encroach on the right of a woman to work, and where women have had to step into more high profile roles often more because of necessity than choice, representation in the country's senior management roles is relatively high. By the same token, women's rights issues, religious constraints, and, crucially in the modern world, economic ones, such as childcare costs, are all key factors which can help determine the levels of representation by women in se

RP/ B2-3

Are universities 'out of whack?'

MAPPING THE FUTURE

Niceto S. Poblador

IN AMERICAN usage, the phrase "out of whack" means being off the main flow of things, like driving at 40 kph in an expressway where everybody else is doing 100. I pose this question about today's universities because I honestly think that institutions of higher learning have become an anachronism. They have become relics of a distant past that bears little resemblance to today's fast-paced, information-driven environment. Compared with progressive business and other types of organizations here and abroad, universities are, by far, among the most inefficient and ineffective social institutions (government bureaus not included). This, to me, is an anomaly considering that universities are supposed to be at the forefront in our ongoing search for new knowledge and innovative ways of applying knowledge, which in recent years has become the planet's most important economic resource.

The raison d'tre of all productive organizations is to combine complementary resources in order to produce value through what is known in the management lexicon as synergies. These complementary resources are drawn either from the organization's own resource base, or obtained from outside sources through some exchange mechanism. The choice of the appropriate institutional and governance arrangements by which this process is achieved depends on a number of factors both internal and external to the organization. The object is for the organization to effectively achieve its stated goals at the lowest possible cost to the organization and society. By these criteria, universities are a dismal failure.

Let me start with the observation that with but few exceptions, educational administrators are concerned primarily with implementing established formal procedures and achieving their mandated numerical performance targets. As a rule, they show little inclination to achieve optimal use of the resources at hand. Moreover, they tend to be more concerned with achieving immediate results rather than sustaining long-run viability by enhancing their institutional resource base.

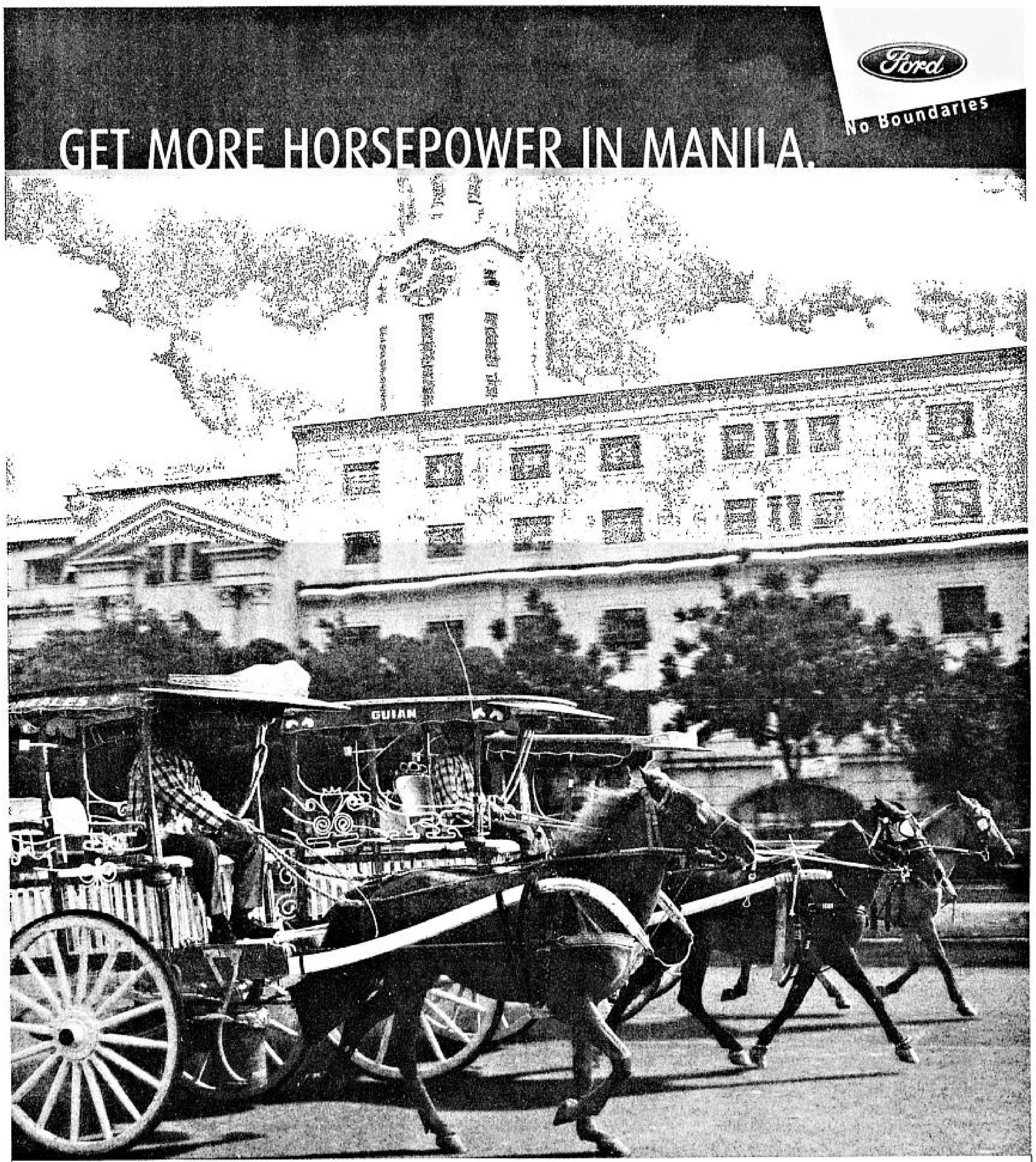
Let me dwell on what I think is an even more compelling reason why universities are inefficient. A university typically consists of several academically (but certainly not administratively) independent colleges, each operating in blissful isolation from one another. These colleges consist of academic departments which often operate exclusively within their respective domains. Finally, faculty members go about their tasks independently and seldom work as teams. The result: failure to generate synergies through complementation. In a world with not boundaries and horizontal organizations, the walls within universities remain as impervious as ever. This is truly incomprehensible, considering that knowledge applications are everywhere undergoing a process of convergence, and that the different sciences and disciplines that constitute our body of knowledge are themselves moving toward greater unity.

These are trends that universities fail to capture and factor into their organizational strucrures and processes.

The end result of these organizational dysfunctions are academic programs, curricular offerings and course designs that are out of sync with the rapidly changing needs of society, and are therefore long overdue for a critical reassessment.

In my monograph entitled The University of the Philippines in the New Millennium: The Uneasy Road Ahead (Publics and Markets, 1999), I made a number of observations which I think equally apply to most other institutions of high

ARE UNIVERSITIES/ B2-3



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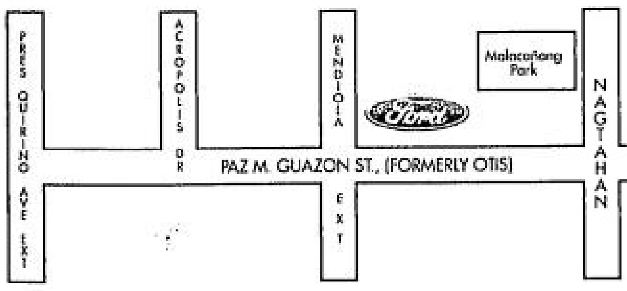

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Editor **Aries Espinosa**

Canada to assess immigrant applications twice

INDEPENDENT immigrant applications to Canada filed before January 1, 2002 which are still pending will undergo dual assessment. This means they will be assessed using the criteria under the former Immigration Act, in which the passmark was set at 70 points and, if they do not pass under this selection system, will be automatically assessed under the new Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (which came into force on June 28, 2002), which sets a passmark of 67 points. In other words, applicants will be assessed under the selection system most favorable to them. Applicants who withdrew their applications between January 1, 2002 and November 30, 2003, and those refused after March 31, 2003 and before June 20, 2003 under the transitional requirements of the Immigration Refugee Protection Regulations, can still avail themselves of the benefits of dual assessment if they reapply before January 1, 2005.

This was relayed by Canadian immigration lawyer Bayani F. Abesamis. "This new policy, which came into effect on December 1, 2003, responds in a very positive way to calls for fairness in the immigrant selection system. It demonstrates Canada's commitment to a fair, expeditious and merit-based selection system," Abesamis states.

On September 18, 2003, Canada also lowered the passmark for skilled workers from 75 to 67 points. The adjustment was made after consultation with immigration stakeholders such as immigration lawyers and immigrant advocates. It reflects Canada's commitment to reach its immigration target, which has been set at between 220,000 to 245,000 new immigrants for 2004.

In 2002, Canada welcomed close to 230,000 new immigrants from all over the world. Of this number, about 60 percent were skilled workers and 29 percent were family-sponsored immigrants. "Filipinos comprise the fourth largest immigrant group to Canada. And we are seeing more independent immigrants, mostly skilled workers, making up the Filipino immigrant profile," notes Abesamis. "And this trend will likely continue with the advent of a new independent immigrant selection system which emphasizes education, work experience and language skills, factors in which Filipinos traditionally score high in," he adds.

Abesamis is holding seminars on the new independent immigrant selection system and conducting consultations in his Makati office. For more information, call 814-0709 or 813-3482.

CPA TOPNOTCHERS CHOOSE P&A

Punongbayan and Araullo (P&A), one of the country's leading auditing firm, is fast becoming a home of topnotchers, as it recently hired 11 top passers of the 2003 CPA Board Examinations. Shown (front row, from left) are Gregorio Navarro, P&A managing partner-operations, together with topnotchers Mutya Maraginot, 1st place; Ma. Elizabeth Liceralde, 2nd place; Reinier Prudente, 2nd place; (second row, from left) Fenalon Chan, 4th place; Khristia Pulido, 7th place; Maila Manansala, 12th place; Elmer Pedrezuela, 12th place; Joan Esponilla, 14th place; Bless Garnace, 15th place; and Henry Aldave V, 15th place. Not shown is Karla Victoria, 4th place. The topnotchers have also freshly completed their Grant Thornton Audit Methodology Training. P&A is a member of Grant Thornton International, one of the world's largest organizations of accounting and consulting firms.

ITDI-DOST formulates topical analgesic from essential oils

RESEARCHERS from the chemicals and minerals division of the Industrial Technology Development Institute (CMD-ITDI), an agency of Department of Science and Technology (DOST), have come up with an effective means to optimize the analgesic activity of locally produced essential oils.

The research team composed of RC Torres, MA Villanueva, FM Sison, PM Cuasay, CO Manalo, EC Monroyo, EA Lanto, RR Estrella, EL Arrogante, I.B Mendoza, R. Banal and CL Melo studied seven locally produced essential oils, namely lemongrass, citronella, eucalyptus, ginger, guava and cinnamon bark and leaves. The scientists tested the extent of action of these essential oils in rats through bioassay.

Results of tests showed that ginger oil extract exhibited the highest analgesic activity, followed by lemongrass oil, cinnamon leaf oil, guava and eucalyptus.

These promising results guided the research team to formulate a greaseless gel and liniment; massage oil and balm with the same pain-relieving effects of natural essential oils and plant extracts. The end products provide cost-effective alternatives to imported topical analgesics.

For more details, write or call the chemicals and minerals division at Industrial Technology Development Institute, DOST Compound, Gen. Santos Avenue, Bicutan, Taguig, Metro Manila at 837-2071 to 82 local 2226, or fax 837-2071 to 82 local 2216. E-mail cmd@dost.gov.ph.

'RISE PHILIPPINE RICE'

The forum 'Rise Philippine Rice' was held recently at the Manila Pavilion with Sec. Luis P. Lorenzo Jr of the Department of Agriculture, Dr. Frisco M. Malabanan of GMA-Rice, Niels Patrick C. Riconalla, vice president of Quedancor, Gregorio Y. Tan Jr, NFA Deputy Administrator, Dr. Andrew Villacorta of DA-RFU2, Lewis Aligaen, Afci assistant vice president, and radio and TV personality Cherry Sarmiento, host and producer of 'Agri-Link', as guests.

SI KUNITACHI, SI MAKATI LINKS

Soroptimist International of Kunitachi member Kayo Sano recently hosted a dinner at the Tokyo Club in Japan to strengthen the friendship link of her club with Soroptimist International of Makati. Shown, from left, are Teruko Hasegawam, SIA Federation director Tes Choa of SI Makati and Kayo Sano, a gallery owner in Kunitachi, Tokyo.

NEW DANCE SCHOOL INAUGURATED

The Philippines' prima ballerina and Ballet Manila's artistic director and principal dancer Lisa Macuja-Elizalde (2nd from left) and Ballet Manila's ballet master and principal dancer Osias Barroso (right) led the ribbon-cutting ceremonies for the opening of Vibeca Danskul located at the ground floor of the AMO Building, 92 New York Street, Quezon City. The school was set up by Virginia 'Gie' Lagula-Bote (2nd from right), a former member of the Bayanihan Dance Company of the Philippines and Pacifica Cultural Dance Company as the school president with Katrina Santos-Mercado, a former member and lead dancer of the Philippine Ballet Theatre as the school director. Vibeca holds classes in classical and modern ballet, as well as in jazz, break dance, body conditioning, and street grooves, and soon will have special classes in interests like Flamenco and Polynesian dance. The school offers free one-month training, equivalent to four sessions, for first-time enrollees, with no registration fees. Also shown at left is Fr. Alfons Sebatu (partly hidden, left). For inquiries, call 912-4283, 912-6781 or 995-7441.

Beyond posters and political ads

POSTERS and streamers in the wrong places and billboards wherever they may be are displays by the candidates of their defiance of the law. Political ads are likewise visible illustrations of how candidates abide by the law or scoff at the rules of the campaign. Both are instances of cheating though they are overtly done-for which reason they are not commonly regarded as cheating. But secrecy is not a requisite element of cheating; it is just an acknowledgment that something is wrong. So when violations are open and blatant, we know the values have become so distorted and/or lawlessness and injustice have become so pervasive that the lawless and unjust are fearless while the righteous have become so fearful as to be so silent.

Such violations are not fair to the candidates who stay within the bounds of the law for sheer lack of resources and for which reason the regulation was conceived. It was intended to level the playing field.

Vote buying, if not for the more and more brazen forms that it has now taken, is a more subtle form of cheating. Article 261 (a) of the Omnibus Election Code states that the "person who gives, offers or promises money or anything of value, gives or promises any office or employment, franchise or grant, public or private, or makes or offers to make an expenditure, directly or indirectly, or cause an expenditure to be made to any person, association, corporation, entity, or community in order to induce anyone or the public in general to vote for or against any candidate or withhold his vote in the election..." is guilty of an election offense.

Money or anything of value (T-shirt with or without the candidate's name or face, ball pen, rice, sardines, land titles, cards) is given, offered or promised in the crime of vote buying. Office, employment (sweeping the streets or digging canals), franchise or grant is given or promised in the crime of vote buying. Expenditures is made or offered to any person (like barangay captain or mayor), association, corporation, entity or community (like your barangay) in order to induce anyone or the public in general to vote for a candidate. These are clear instances of vote buying.

They are the blatantly used methods of cheating as even incumbent officials resort to these. They go out to campaign, distributing rice and other food items, including even money. They dole out cards that promise benefits. They give papers that represent properties. They give out jobs that the economy has not spawned but which only their criminal plotting has conceived. They have completely lost their sense of propriety in their morbid fear of defeat. And they call these their achievements. Others also call these acts of governance. If the nailing of posters and streamers on trees and public posts and billboard on highways and giving T-shirts containing names and faces of candidates worn by newly hired government workers are acts of governance, then incumbent officials have not started campaigning: they have only begun to govern.

Let us get a clear look at these phenomena. The Omnibus Election Code sets our bearings. It provides that "any officer or employee in the civil service...who, directly or indirectly, intervenes in any election campaign or engages in any partisan political activity, except to vote..." is guilty of an election offense. Being a walking poster for a particular candidate is definitely engaging in partisan political activity. If this is done in one place, there is enough evidence. But if it is being done everywhere in the country, then there is conspiracy to politicize the government and its projects. This is not a good platform for the nation.

It is also good to know where the money for such T-shirts, cards, and food items come from. Section 261 (o) of the Omnibus Election Code states that it is an election offense to use "public funds, money deposited in trust, equipment, facilities owned and controlled by the government for an election campaign" under any guise whatsoever. This crime covers also the use of government vehicles for campaign purposes.

Comelec is here to ring the bell. You may win the game but you lose the spectators. You will also lose the playing field to others.

Breakthrough drug enhances cholesterol-lowering

A NEW drug that will reinforce physicians' existing therapeutic tools in lowering a patient's low-density lipoprotein (LDL-C) or the bad cholesterol, is now out in the market.

Ezetimibe, launched under the brand name Ezetrol by Schering-Plough Philippines Inc, has been shown to have a clinically significant supplementary effect when used with a statin, reducing LDL-C by an additional 25 percent.

Werner Katzmann MD, PhD, Far East regional medical director of the Schering-Plough Research Institute, presented scientific clinical data on the effectiveness and safety of ezetimibe in a lecture during the joint annual convention of the Philippine Society of Hypertension and Philippine Lipid Society recently. The drug will help patients achieve their guideline targets for cholesterol reduction without having to increase their statin dosage, Katzmann emphasized.

Statins are currently prescribed as the most potent drug to lower LDL-C and prevent heart attacks and strokes particularly in high-risk patients. Attainment of recommended optimal levels of LDL-C however could not be achieved in a big number of patients with cholesterol problems.

Ezetimibe is the first in a new class of cholesterol-lowering drugs known as cholesterol absorption inhibitors (CAI) that blocks the transport of both dietary and biliary cholesterol across the intestinal wall. It prevents cholesterol from being reabsorbed by the body from the bowel. This leads to a reduction in the cholesterol delivered to the liver.

What statin can do only is work on the liver but they do not work on the small intestines where cholesterol absorption happen. "Ezetimibe works on one pathway, while statins work on another pathway, and the combination provides the desired results via dual inhibition," explained Katzmann.

Cholesterol management by administering statin is important in treating cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) and its complications such as heart attack and stroke. However, some patients experience side-effect or tolerance problems with higher doses of statins. Ezetimibe optimizes the LDL-lowering effects of statins with a favorable tolerability profile. It can be taken any time of the day with or without food, and may be taken at the same time with any statin.

Currently approved in several countries including the United States, once-daily ezetimibe 10 mg is indicated in co-administration with a statin as adjunctive therapy to diet in patients with primary hypercholesterolemia.

ProductFILES

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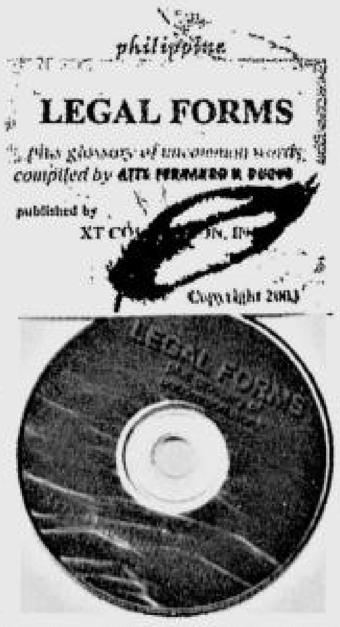
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YOU DON'T have to go to your lawyer to be able to draft an affidavit regarding the vehicular accident you figured in for the purpose of supporting your claim against the insurance company. With the "Philippine Legal Forms" in CD put out by the XT Collection Inc, you just have to insert the CD in your computer's CD-ROM drive and click the form that you wish to formulate, then fill up the blank spaces with the appropriate data. If you are renting out your apartment unit or selling a house and lot, or if you are a senior citizen contemplating to prepare your Last Will and Testament, the "Philippine Legal Forms" come in handy.

Aside from the form itself, the CD advises you what requirements are needed to accomplish the form so that it will conform to legal forms just how your lawyer will do it. With the CD, however, you don't have to pay the enormous sum your lawyer will impose on your wallet.

The CD sells at P245, and there is the added bonus of a glossary with words you rarely encounter. It is available at selected outlets of National Book Store. Inquire about the CD at 288-0491, 0917-5371937, or e-mail ferzen@netasia.net. This venture is a project of lawyer Fernando B. Duque and published by XT Collection Inc.

Are universities 'out of whack?'

From page B2-1

er learning in the country today:

1. In pursuing a market-driven strategy, the University is trying to be "everything to everybody." As a result, it has spread its meager resources too thinly over too many activities, thus compromising its overall impact on society. What this implies is that universities must endeavor to pursue a focus strategy, concentrating their efforts on programs and courses in which they posses the required competence, and leave everything else to others. Further complementation can be achieved through a number of networking arrangements.

2. Different units offer essentially the same generic academic programs. Take management, for example. To me, management is management is management, whether applied to business firms, hospitals, churches, NGOs, educational institutions, and even government bureaus. All these applications are based on the same core concepts and theoretical principles. Consolidating programs in business, hospital, educational, and public administration under one roof will enable the university to take advantage of complementation and at the same time enjoy economies of scale in specific areas of expertise. There are a number of organizational design options that can be explored to achieve the desired results.

3. Several common subjects are offered by different colleges as part of their respective curricula. For example statistics, economic analysis, management information systems, and organizational behavior are staple courses in many programs. Quite often, however, these subjects are taught by professors in these units whose areas of expertise lie elsewhere rather than being assigned to the academic departments where the relevant expertise resides. Such unnecessary duplication of effort is not only costly but also result in poor quality of output. By applying its specialized skills and expertise to a wider range of applications, an organization is also able to enjoy economies of scope by spreading certain fixed costs over a wider mix of output.

4. Course offerings often fail to capture the interrelationships among different sciences and disciplines. This lack of integration across complementary disciplines is unfortunate considering that most real world problems in medicine, biotechnology, business, agriculture, public governance and environmental management, to mention but a few, straddle several branches of knowledge. Take the case of business administration. While it is generally recognized that management problems cut across all management disciplines, colleges of business still insist on offering separate course in marketing, production, finance, strategy, business ethics, and organizational behavior instead of designing courses around problem areas. Consequently, students tend to have a compartmentalized view of the management process and become less effective on the job.

Universities can significantly improve productivity through the effective use of their resources, by choosing the appropriate mix of academic programs, and by rationalizing their course offerings. The opportunities for improvement are limitless.

(The article reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines. The author is a retired professor of UP and current Professor at the Baguio Colleges Foundation. Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph)

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RP has . . .

From page B2-1

nior management."

Benjamin Punongbayan, Chair and CEO of P&A, adds: "The survey results confirm the active participation and influential position that women hold in Philippine business."

About Grant Thornton

Grant Thornton International is one of the world's leading organizations of independently owned and managed accounting and consulting firms providing assurance, tax and specialist advice to independent businesses and their owners.

Proportion of companies with women in senior management

Russia	89 %
Philippines	85 %
US	75 %
Mexico	75 %
South Africa	75 %
Hong Kong	74 %
Greece	73 %
Poland	72 %
Australia	70 %
New Zealand	70 %
Indonesia	67 %
Taiwan	67 %
Singapore	66 %
Ireland	65 %
Canada	64 %
UK	62 %
Sweden	59 %
Turkey	57 %
France	52 %
Italy	48 %
Spain	47 %
India	42 %
Germany	33 %
Japan	29 %
Pakistan	27 %
Netherlands	27 %

% of respondents

Women as a % of total in senior management

Russia	42 %
Philippines	39 %
Poland	36 %
New Zealand	31 %
Taiwan	31 %
Indonesia	29 %
Mexico	27 %
South Africa	26 %
Hong Kong	26 %
Singapore	23 %
Canada	22 %
Australia	22 %
Greece	22 %
France	21 %
Turkey	20 %
US	20 %
Italy	18 %
Sweden	18 %
UK	18 %
Germany	16 %
Ireland	16%
Pakistan	15 %
Spain	14 %
India	12 %
Netherlands	9 %
Japan	8 %

Poe, politics . . .

From page B2-4

to 60 could be in the cards.

5. Should they raise interest rates now to protect the peso from further falling?

Lambregts: With only a moderate economic recovery and modest inflationary pressure, I think the Philippines is best served by a central bank that remains on hold for the time being. Again, the Fed being on hold helps out here as well.

Goel: Using monetary tools to guide the currency markets is never a preferred option for central banks, and this is almost certainly the case for the Philippines as well, particularly in the current circumstances—when the fall in the peso is in large part due to a rising political risk premium rather than fundamental macroeconomic reasons. That said, Bank of America feel (as above) that the central bank will likely find themselves left with no option but to resort to hiking interest rates in an attempt to prevent the peso from falling any further.

(Rico Hizon anchor's BBC World's Asia Business Report from Monday to Friday. He is based in Singapore. Send feedback at rico.hizon@bbc.co.uk)

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MECHANICS:

1. Customers who purchase any Isuzu Crosswind variant, whether through outright cash payment or financing, from any authorized Isuzu dealership nationwide from March 1 to 31, 2004 are eligible to join the raffle.

2. With each purchase of an Isuzu Crosswind, the customer will be given one (1) raffle ticket for a chance to win the Grand Prize. The raffle ticket must be filled-out with COMPLETE NAME, ADDRESS, TEL. NUMBER, and affixed SIGNATURE and dropped in drop boxes located in the participating dealership where product was purchased.

3. Aside from the raffle ticket, the customer will also be given a free premium item from Isuzu, depending on the Crosswind variant purchased:
i. Purchase of either Crosswind XL, XT, or XTRM, the customer will be given a Coleman Cooler
ii. Purchase of either Crosswind XUV or XUVi, the customer will be given a Roof Basket

4. In the Grand Raffle draw, two winners will be drawn, one for the Metro Manila area and one for the provincial area.

5. Winners will be given a choice as to which prize they would like to avail of:

a. Grand Prize Option 1 – A brand-new Isuzu 4x2 D-MAX Manual Transmission

b. Grand Prize Option 2 – A 100% rebate on the actual retail cost of Crosswind purchased (rebate excludes cost of LTO Registration, car insurance, shipping fees, and chattel mortgage)

6. Deadline for submission of entries is on March 31, 2004.

7. Drawing of winners is on April 15, 2004 at Isuzu Commonwealth 5:00PM in the presence of Isuzu Philippines Corporation officials and a representative from the DTI. Drawing of winners will be telecast on Auto Extreme at 3:30PM in Channel 9, two weeks after the draw date.

8. A participant can win only once.

9. All prizes are TAX-PAID, no fees are required upon claiming of prizes.

10. Winners will be notified via telephone and registered mail. Winners will be announced in leading newspapers.

11. Winners may claim their prizes at the Customer Relations Department of Isuzu Philippines Corporation, Laguna Technopark, Sta. Rosa Laguna upon presentation of a valid ID, winning stub and registered mail.

12. Prizes not claimed within 60 days from receipt of notification will be forfeited in favor of Isuzu Philippines Corporation with the prior approval of the DTI.

13. Employees of Isuzu Philippines Corporation, authorized dealerships of Isuzu Philippines Corporation, and Great Wall Advertising Philippines, Inc. including their relatives up to the 3rd degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified.from joining.

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Poe, politics and the peso

INTERNATIONAL BUZZ

Rico Hizon

THE PHILIPPINE election campaign is underway and it's putting pressure on the peso. Foreign investors are worried that political and economic uncertainties might push the currency to more record lows. Analysts say the huge budget deficit is among the key factors keeping investors edgy. But more importantly, the prospect of having another film actor running the country is also keeping the currency depressed. The peso has been the worst performing currency in the last 12 months, despite a weak dollar environment.

But currency analysts I spoke with in Singapore, are confident that the currency can survive the rigors and the results of the elections as the rate of inflation is quite low, and the gross national product grew faster than expected at 5.5 percent last year. Sameer Goel is a vice president Strategist from Bank of America and Jan Lambregts is the Head of Research, Asia-Pacific of Dutch-based Rabo Bank. I got their thoughts on the currency and where it's headed in the near term.

1. Will the disqualification of Philippine movie icon Fernando Poe Jr. from the presidential race by the Supreme Court have an impact on the peso?

Goel: FPJ's disqualification from the Presidential race, if it happens, could prove to be a double edged sword for the peso. Poe is not perceived by the market as a particular favorite of the business community, so the markets may rejoice at his exit from the race. That said, the obvious risks of mass protests, possibly violent (as is being threatened), by Poe's supporters would likely keep the market sentiment on the peso negative.

Lambregts: If FPJ were to win the elections, the Philippines could very well be in serious trouble, as he lacks experience in public office or governance. In addition he's widely considered a pawn for the commercial interests that were also behind that other movie star-turned-president. Such an outlook hardly provides a positive background for the peso. As such, a disqualification of FPJ from the presidential race on the back of a court finding that he was indeed not borne a Filipino citizen, could dispel some of the market's fears for the medium-to-long term as that risk is eliminated. However, short-term, the impact may very well be a negative one for the peso, since his disqualification could provoke violent protests by his supporters.

2. What if FPJ is not disqualified, what would this mean for the peso before the elections?

Lambregts: In the run-up to such elections I expect the peso to continue its weak footing versus the US dollar. The election itself will likely be a two-way contest between the incumbent President Arroyo and FPJ. The political battle itself is likely to be a bitter one. The main risk in the upcoming months will continue to be poll-related violence and political instability. A restless military could also very well see coup rumors flying regularly, further weakening the peso. This is all taking place against the background of a relatively modest economic recovery, with an economy that could really do without political decisions and could use a focus on economic reforms instead and keeping a check on the government deficit instead.

Goel: The peso's fortunes will be closely tied with the developments along the electoral campaign trail—not just the voter opinions about who wins, but also the market perception of security threats. Bank of America doesn't see the peso getting much relief in the run up to the elections, as the markets remain worried about both security concerns on the campaign trail, and also the uncertainty of the nature of economic policy team that would take up power after May.

3. If FPJ becomes the Philippines' 15th President, will this have a significant impact on the peso? And why?

Goel: What is most critical for the FX markets is that the elections are carried out peacefully, and the results are decisive—with little scope for dispute over the legality of the election outcome. Though FPJ is not quite the favorite of the business community at the moment, where opinion trends to confirm over the next two to three months that he would win with a comfortable margin, the markets could gradually get used to the idea of his Presidency. Under such a scenario, we could well see the peso pulling back against the dollar (as the election-related risk premium wears off) in the second half of the year. Of course, this will be contingent on other factors as well—including the perceived competency of the new government.

Lambregts: FPJ is widely considered to lack the necessary experience in public office or governance. As such, the Philippines could be in for some serious trouble, both at the economic as well as the political level if he were to become president. What's more, being a close friend to that other movie star-turned-president, Joseph Estrada, FPJ is regarded by many as little more than a front for the Marcos-era elite. Of course, once in office, there's always the chance FPJ actually surprising on the upside, which could help the peso. But overall I'd expect his election to have a direct negative impact on the peso (much of which by that time probably has been priced in already), while providing a negative background for the longer-term outlook for the peso.

4. Where is the Philippine peso headed from current levels before the elections on May 10?

Goel: Given the risk-reward arithmetic in the possible election-related scenarios, it looks to us that the best strategy is to position oneself long (dollar-peso) for the next three months. The Bank of America probability-weighted target for the pair is P58:$1 in the run up to the elections.

Lambregts: We'd regard any dips in the exchange rate (possibly inspired by central bank action) towards trend line support (currently at P55.60:$1) as an opportunity to short the peso versus the dollar. We think medium-term upside potential in peso-dollar rate can stretch to P57:$1, that's assuming a negative background for the peso with FPJ continuing to lead the polls, but no serious rapid deterioration of political stability. Now, if the situation does turn more ugly, a jump

POE/ B2-3

Who extends the hand first during a handshake

GOODNESS GRACES

Lia S. Bernardo

Q: I DO not correct the wrong pronunciation of people I talk to. However if I have to say that same word he/she pronounced erroneously as part of the conversation, I will say it correctly (will bring as little attention to it as I possibly can or avoid the word entirely if possible). This sometimes make the erring person feel as though I'm correcting him/her which is not my intention, specially if the erring party is higher-ranked than I am, and specially if there are other people.

I don't want to rub my superior the wrong way but I don't want to appear foolish in front of our other suppliers/clients (officer levels) either. I choose not to perpetuate the error. Am I wrong and should I just echo the wrong pronunciation?

A: No, you do not echo the wrong pronunciation. But, you do have to ignore it when the word is mispronounced during a conversation. This is especially true with clients. Now, for officemates or even superiors, you may want to point out the error to them, casually but in private, at a later time. If they are committing the error repeatedly and if the error comes out often during client calls or office meetings then a little constructive criticism will help. However, more often than not, if you use the proper pronunciation during your conversations, they will pick up on it and make the necessary adjustments.

Q: When is it appropriate to be the first to extend a hand during a handshake encounter? I am a 29-year-old female. Middle management.

A: In a business setting, the person who is of higher rank is always first to extend a hand. While for social functions, it is always the woman who first offers her hand for a handshake. However, bear in mind that although these are the rules they aren't strictly implemented. You can extend your hand right after you are introduced to a person. What is absolutely unacceptable is to completely ignore a handshake that is being offered to you. Shake hands when greeting and/or saying goodbye.

Handshaking tips

Here are some handshaking tips that may help you:

Handshakes are the only acceptable physical contact for men and women in the business arena.

Handshakes are the universally accepted business greeting. Hugs & kisses are taboo in the business arena.

You are judged by the quality of the handshake.

Good handshake:

1. Keep the fingers together with the thumb up and open
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Editor **Louie C. Camino**

ON MARRYING MATET DE LEON

'We've always wanted this, even before the baby came'

By Marinel R. Cruz

MATET'S mom said we look so much alike that we're probably meant for each other."

That was basketball cager John Michael "Mikey" Estrada talking about the first time he met his mother-in-law, superstar Nora Aunor.

Mikey, 21, was married to Nora's daughter, actress Matet de Leon, 20, at a civil rites in Quezon City last Feb. 24.

The couple is expecting their first born in August.

Nervous

Mikey said he first met Nora during a fan's day arranged for Matet last January and found her to be very "nice and warm to me."

"I was so nervous at first," Mikey recalled. "But when she said *magkamukha daw kami ni* Matet *kaya magkakatuluyan kami* (Matet and I resembled each other that's why we would be a couple), I started to relax. She was really okay."

Nora described Mikey as the "silent type" during a live telephone patch interview in GMA 7's "Star Talk."

"*Magaan ang loob ko sa kanya* (I was drawn to him)," the actress said during the interview with host Butch Francisco.

Nora admitted during the same interview that she had learned about her daughter's pregnancy through a friend.

"That's why when she told me about it, I was not surprised anymore," she said.

Mikey said he first found out that Matet was pregnant on the day she was supposed to meet with fans.

"The truth is, Matet had already tested positive the previous day. But the result was too hazy," Mikey explained. "We only confirmed the result that day."

Mikey, who plays for the University Athletic Association of the Philippines or UAAP under the National University team, said having a baby with Matet pushes him to play harder.

"I'm more serious about life now. I have a wife and a child, I won't be playing for myself anymore," he said.

Mikey first played with the University of the East a few years ago. He plans to rejoin the team when the UAAP opens its new season in July.

"Now, I'm involved in buying and selling cars," Mikey said. "I also want to put up a small business after our wedding."

Simple wedding

Also on "Star Talk," Matet said she wanted to have a simple wedding. The nuptials will be held at Mt. Carmel Church in Quezon City on March 20, 4 p.m.

"It would be a very solemn wedding. Only a few people will be invited," said Nora's publicist Vonnel Mirandilla. "The couple never wanted their wedding to be the wedding of the year."

She said a reception will be held at the Gazebo Royale on Visayas Avenue in Quezon City.

Nono Palmos will design the bride's gown, according to Mirandilla.

Actresses Helen Gamboa and Caridad Sanches, and Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office General Manager Rosario Uriarte will be among the couple's principal sponsors.

Feeling secure

Earlier, Matet revealed that "although we admit to getting married sooner than we planned, we did not do it because of the baby."

Mikey said he and Matet had "talked about raising a family a long time ago. We're both

'WE'VE/ C2

MOM Nora gives her blessing to daughter Matet, who married basketball player Mikey Estrada on Thursday in a civil ceremony in their Quezon City home.

Halle Berry talks about white mom, surviving Hollywood

IT WASN'T easy for Halle Berry to grow up black with a white Mom, who the star says is the real hero.

By Janet Susan R. Nepales
LA Correspondent

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

LOS ANGELES—There is some pain in Halle Berry's eyes.

It's a pain that she somehow tries to cover up with her winsome smile and her gentle, soft-spoken voice. The actress looks so fragile and delicate that you somehow wonder how she has survived the physical and emotional roller coaster ride that she has experienced in Hollywood.

"I try to trust my guts," she discloses. "As I get older, I learn to trust my guts more even if it doesn't make sense. I try to listen to that little voice in my head that tells me what to do. We all know what the right thing is but somehow, we don't follow our instincts, and that's when things mess up."

Vulnerable

With her childlike demeanor and her tiny voice, the 37-year-old Cleveland native who recently split from her second husband, R&B singer Eric Benet, after less than three years of marriage, appears to be more vulnerable in person.

Dressed in a purple lace long-sleeved floral-print blouse and denim pants, Berry, who was named by FHM Philippines magazine as "2003's Sexiest Woman in the World," is growing her curly hair long for a change.

Hollywood history

INQUIRER Entertainment is talking to Berry at the Beverly Hills hotel for her latest suspense-drama-thriller "Gothika," where she stars with Penelope Cruz and Robert Downey, Jr.

The Academy Award-winning actress, who made Hollywood history when she became the first black actress to win an Oscar Best Actress award for her performance in "Monster's Ball," is calm and collected. She is definitely no screaming diva or an over-rated pin-up girl. Sensitive, smart and sincere, Berry projects the intelligence and confidence of a Hollywood survivor.

"I believe in spirituality," she says, turning contemplative. "I believe in the Creator. I believe there is a God who is much more powerful than any of us and that we are

HALLE/ C2

New show advocates animal rights

By Amadís Ma. Guerrero

THERE'S a new kid on the TV block. And it's not a kid, but a dog, and invisible at that.

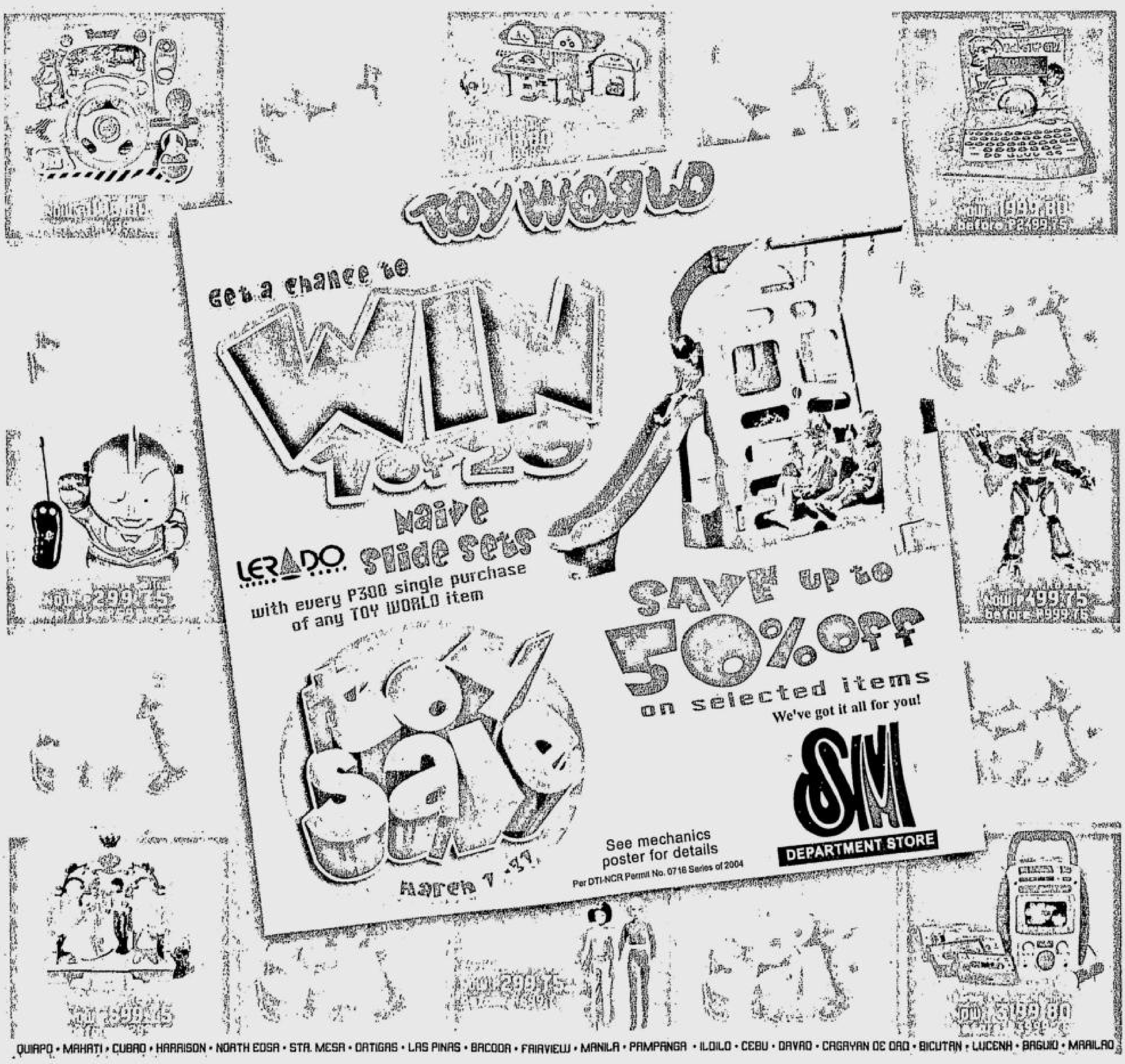
It all began when film and video production company executives Lem and Espie Garcellano were watching an animal show on television one night. The focus was on fighting cocks; the couple, being animal lovers, did not like what they were seeing, and considered it garbage.

Better way

The fighting cocks were being put on display and they would, of course, at some future date be pitted against each other in a bloody fight, and be wounded or killed in the process.

There must be a better way to present animals on TV, thought the Garcellanos, who head Get the Picture? And they began to discuss the matter: There should be a show about pets and their owners, and the benefits to be derived from responsible pet ownership. The show should be family-oriented, and educational as well as entertaining.

NEW/ C6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'We've always . . .

From page C1

emotionally prepared. We've always wanted this, even before the baby came."

He and Matet met in a party at a bar on Timog Avenue in Quezon City eight months ago, Mikey said. He said Matet had gotten his phone number from a common friend.

"We've been going out since," Mikee recalled.

The couple is now sharing a home in Quezon City.

"I feel very secure in my life now," said Mikee. "I've always known that Matet is the right person for me.

"There will be no major adjustments for us, except perhaps the fact that we won't go out on gimmicks that often," he added.

Mikee is the youngest of three siblings of Mike and Gigi Estrada. He is currently taking up management at the National University on F. Jhocson Street in Manila.

Halle . . .

From page C1

all here for a very specific reason and the journey of life is figuring out what that reason is and making that contribution to whatever that is."

Raised by her white single mom after her black father left them when she was four, Berry grew up learning to accept the two different cultures and peoples.

Real hero

"I was raised in an all-black neighborhood and went to a predominantly all-white school. My mother is the real survivor here, too. Imagine being white and single and raising two black kids during the '60s. I am so close to my mother that I don't know what I'd do without her. I have my own therapist but she knows me so well that she acts like my own therapist," she confesses.

In the Columbia Pictures' supernatural thriller, "Gothika," where Berry portrays Miranda Grey, a brilliant psychiatrist who is accused of a murder that she cannot remember committing, Berry's mother became an unofficial consultant for the movie.

"Since my mother worked as a nurse in a psychiatric ward for 35 years, we sometimes consulted her if what we were doing was right," she says.

Not right

"There was a part in the movie where Robert Downey, Jr's character, Dr. Peter Graham, actually slapped me. And somehow after he did it, I said to myself, 'That doesn't feel right.'"

She giggles and continues, "So I called up my mom and I asked her, 'Mom, would this really happen?' And she said, 'Oh my God, no! There'd be malpractice suits all over the place if it did.'"

Berry admits, "I think I am very comfortable in those areas of psychiatry and psychology since they have been parts of my everyday life."

There were three

HALLE/C3

A timeless tale of familial ties and friendship

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

REVIEW

PLAYING the Irish family transported to America are Paddy Considine, Samantha Morton, real sisters Sara and Emma Bolger.

IT'S RARE that films about family dramas touch on how such units thrive without the compulsory angle of abuse, adultery or feigned harmony. More often than not, a movie family looks and feels more interesting if such themes give it a slant toward dysfunction.

Which isn't to say that the seemingly perfect family doesn't translate into good, compelling protagonists. That will always depend on how nicely written the characters are, of course.

The Greenbelt Art Film exclusive, "In America," features a poor but tight Irish family who sneaks into the US to look for greener pastures. They settle in good old New York, where they happily transform a decrepit tenement unit into their simple but proud home. The "vacationers" start building new lives, and do their best to blend in.

Strangers, strange land

Husband and father Johnny (Paddy Considine from "Last Resort") is an aspiring theater actor stuck in audition mode. He drives a cab to earn, rehearsing his lines at home during down time. His wife, Sarah (Samantha Morton, the main precognitive psychic in "Minority Report"), chips in by working at the neighborhood ice cream parlor.

Their young daughters, Christy and Ariel (real sisters Sara and Emma Bolger), awed by their new environment, adapt rather quickly and with nary a complaint about their financially challenged state. This, however, sometimes makes them feel like unwanted tourists at school. In their old, creaky building, they befriend their reclusive neighbor, the temperamental artist Mateo (Djimon Hounsou).

Mateo, like them, seems like a stranger in a very strange land as well. The happy, loving family is greatly tested when old pains resurface, which affects the solitary Mateo profoundly. Together, Mateo and the Irish family wade through their personal hang-ups, offering each other the proverbial shoulder to cry on—since they have little else to give each other, anyway.

Jim Sheridan ("In the Name of the Father") directs the film, based partly on his experiences during his move to America. It's also a family affair, as his two daughters contributed in the writing of the screenplay. He was able to tell a tale that conveys itself effectively through a simple, decent script, five mesmerizing actors and sheer creativity.

Disparate imagery

Sheridan plays with disparate imagery that lingers long after viewing. Take a particular series of rapid intercuts between three separate images, for instance: The kids eating ice cream in the parlor while watching a heavy downpour, the partially clothed bodies of Johnny and Sarah during lovemaking, and Mateo pressing his blood-drenched hand on his canvas. These are tied together by an upbeat ditty in the background, the visuals looping in a flurry of varied emotions all at once.

Disarming

This uniquely guided attention to the marriage of sight and sound creates an even more wondrous synthesis with the inspired actors. Considine, Morton, Hounsou and the adorable Bolger sisters are indeed a joy to watch. Every time a character sheds a tear, even when it's expected, well, it's just disarming.

The stark bareness of this touching and timeless story works in making this a sincere look into any family's strengths and weaknesses. It peers into the sacrifices made in the name of love as well, whether it's romantic, filial or platonic.

"In America" is worth watching a second or third time, as its beauty is made further evident in subsequent viewing.

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SAN MIGUEL CORPORATION

Halle Berry talks about white mom

From page C2

things, she says, that made her do the movie: producer Joe Silver ("who has been a dear friend and supporter for the past 10 years. He came to me with the script and I read it right away."), the genre ("I haven't worked on anything like it before and I want to try new things"), and the role.

Great role

She explains the latter, "It's a great role for a woman. The character is smart, very intellectual, but very vulnerable at the same time. She is a victim and I love to play those triumphant women characters who have to beat the odds and beat a bunch of sh*t in what they're doing. I just love to do that.

"I've always wanted to play these roles. This industry is about proving yourself and growing into the artist that you have always dreamed of becoming. I've grown as a person through the art. Because every time I do something, I learn more about myself and every time something happens to me, I use my experience in the art to learn more about how to handle real life."

Berry, who starred as Jinx in the last James Bond feature "Die Another Day" with Pierce Brosnan, and who played Storm in "X2," the sequel to the action hit "X-Men," is currently in production for "Catwoman."

"I don't know how I suddenly became the 'Action Woman,'" she says, amused.

Physically demanding

But she admits that when she read the script for "Gothika," she never realized how physically demanding her role is.

"It was only when I actually had to do it that I realized how physically demanding the part is," she confesses.

"There are times when I ask director Mathieu Kassovitz, 'What? You want me to run over what? With no shoes on and fall down and get wet like what?' I really didn't visualize that part of it when I was reading the script so some of these things happened to me without me seeking them out. Once I got into the role, it was then that I realized how very physical it is. In fact, I think this is far more physical than 'X-Men' was for me!" she exclaims.

It was so physical that she hurt herself in one scene with Robert Downey, Jr.

"It was the scene when they told me I was crazy and I killed someone. The two guys were holding me down and I just banged myself in the wall and twisted my wrist. We didn't work for several weeks because most of the scenes had me in it," she recalls.

More aware

"Sometimes, it does happen. There is such a thing as a career-ending injury. After that experience, I became much more aware of my body and how fragile I am. Imagine, just one little thing would disrupt the whole course of plans that I had for myself. I still go into walls but I have become more cautious than I have ever been. So now, if I think I could injure myself, I just let my double do it," she discloses.

The thought of her adopted 12-year-old daughter, India, Eric Benet's daughter with another woman who died when India was just 10 months old, puts a smile on Berry's face.

"I just love being a mother," she admits.

"I can do whatever I want when I'm with her—we eat junk food, we play, we laugh we stay up late and talk. I'm like a kid again when I'm with her. It's just great!"

But she says, "I can't protect her. As they say, 'You can run but you can't hide.' That's the sad irony of it all. I just make her aware of it (fame and the attention) and make her accept reality. I can't pretend that it doesn't exist and put up a facade. I don't think that's fair to her because one day, she will grow up and look me in the eye and wonder why I never prepared her for it. And I don't want her to ever look at me like that."

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MECHANICS:
1. All natural born females residing in the Philippines between 18 - 24 years old meeting the criteria below are invited to join the search for Miss Silka 2004:
   - fair complexion
   - at least 5'3" in height
   - with pleasing personality of good moral character
   - College level or College graduate

*PROMO STARTS DECEMBER 1, 2003 UNTIL MARCH 31, 2004

2. Entries have to be mailed with the following requirements enclosed:
   - one (1) label or empty box carton of any Silka product
   - Bio-data including name, address, contact number and signature
   - Vital statistics including height and weight
   - 3R size close-up colored picture
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3. Entries have to be mailed to the following address:

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4. Selection Process:
   - There will be four (4) qualification rounds held before the day of Miss Silka 2004 Pageant.
   - For each qualification round, twenty (20) candidates will be interviewed. Three (3) will be chosen as finalists for each round – for a total of twelve (12) finalists to compete for the title of Miss Silka 2004 on the day of the pageant.
   - Selected candidates and finalists will be notified through registered mail. For those residing in remote areas of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, 2-way transportation fare and 1 night hotel accommodation will be provided for the participant and 1 companion.

Schedule of Events:

Event	Event Date	Last Day for Entry Submission
Qualification round # 1	January 10, 2004	December 31, 2003
Qualification round # 2	February 7, 2004	January 31, 2004
Qualification round # 3	March 6, 2004	February 29, 2004
Qualification round # 4	April 14, 2004	March 31, 2004
Miss Silka Pageant 2004	April 24, 2004	

*Only one entry per participant will be acknowledged throughout the duration of the search.
*All Silka employees, distributors, retailers and advertising agencies, including their relatives up to the 3rd degree of consanguinity or affinity are excluded.

5. Awards:

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2nd runner up
- Php 30,000
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12 finalists chosen during the elimination rounds
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Candidates interviewed
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DID YOU KNOW...

Controversial television show host **Willie Revillame** tries to explain his constant search for love by citing his childhood, which he spent being passed around from one relative to another. Revillame, 43, says his parents had never married and that he has six siblings on his mother's side and eight siblings on his father's side. The actor has three daughters, Mariel Soriano, 21, by the oldest sister of Maricel Soriano, BeqBeq, and by two other different women. He was married to Princess Punzalan, but the union was annulled.

Araneta Center ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7

Ali 1	UBELT
Ali 2	MILAN
Ali 3	SOMETHINGS GOTTA GIVE
Ali 4	COLD MOUNTAIN
Ali 5	DUPLEX
Ali 6	KUYA
Ali 7	WATER DEMON

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MAR 10	PBA: REDBULL VS. SHELL
MAR 12	SONG BIRD & SONG WRITER REPEAT
MAR 13	PBA: PUREFOODS VS STA. LUCIA

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THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	U-BELT
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	U-BELT
B	BURLESK KING
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	KUYA
CINEMA-2	U-BELT
CINEMA-3	MYSTIC RIVER (RI)
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	HAUNTED MANSION
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	RUNAWAY JURY
CINEMA-6	CHASING LIBERTY
CINEMA-7	WISHING STAIRS
CINEMA-8	GUSTO KO SA LALAKI (RI)
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	SOMETHING GOTTA GIVE
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	DUPLEX
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	COLD MOUNTAIN
CINEMA-12	WATER DEMON
CINEMA-14	GHOST HOUSE
CINEMA-15	MILAN
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
(LAS PIÑAS)	MILAN
CINEMA-1	HAUNTED MANSION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED
CINEMA-4	CLOSED
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

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1	DUPLEX	10:55, 1:05, 3:15, 5:25, 7:35, 9:45	PG-13
2	SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE	11:30, 2:20, 5:10, 8:00, 10:50	R-13
3	RUNAWAY JURY	11:50, 2:20, 4:50, 7:20, 9:50	R-13
4	LOST IN TRANSLATION	12:25, 2:30, 4:35, 6:40, 8:45, 10:50	PG-13

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RUNAWAY JURY **R13** 1:15, 4:00, 6:45, 9:30	**DUPLEX** **PG13** 12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00	**HAUNTED MANSION** **GP** 1:30. 1:30, 3:30, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30
LOST IN TRANSLATION **PG13** 12:45, 2:55, 5:05, 7:15, 9:25	**COLD MOUNTAIN** **R18** 12:25, 3:30, 6:35, 9:40	**SOMETHING GOTTA GIVE** **R13** 12:10, 2:40, 5:10, 7:40, 10:10

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Cinema	Movie	Times
CINEMA 1 THX	HAUNTED MANSION	11:10, 1:20, 3:30, 5:40, 7:50, 10:00
2	SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE	10:40, 1:25, 4:10, 6:55, 9:45
3	MILAN	11:20, 2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00
4	COLD MOUNTAIN	10:20, 1:15, 4:10, 7:05, 10:00
5	DUPLEX	10:55, 1:05, 3:15, 5:25, 7:35, 9:45
6	LOST IN TRANSLATION	12:05, 2:15, 4:25, 6:40, 9:00
7	U-BELT	11:50, 2:20, 4:50, 7:20, 9:50
8	WATER DEMON	12:30, 2:35, 4:40, 6:50, 9:00
9	KUYA	12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00
10	RUNAWAY JURY	11:10, 1:50, 4:30, 7:10, 9:50

MATINEE: Monday to Friday/ 10 am-4pm except holidays
Matinee Price: P100 THX cinema / P80 for one level cinemas
Regular Price: P130 THX / P95/65 for two levels cinemas / P95 for one level cinemas

ERMITA

526-7185 / 536-7809 to 12

Cinema	Movie	Times
1	SOMETHING GOTTA GIVE	11:20, 2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00
2	COLD MOUNTAIN	10:10, 1:00, 3:50, 6:40, 9:50
3	MILAN	11:10, 1:50, 4:30, 7:10, 9:50
4	GHOST HOUSE	11:35, 1:45, 3:55, 6:05, 8:10, 10:00
5	LOST IN TRANSLATION	11:35, 1:45, 3:55, 6:05, 8:10, 10:00
6	DUPLEX	10:40, 12:40, 2:40, 4:40, 6:40, 8:35, 10:00 SDDS
7	WATER DEMON	10:40, 12:50, 3:00, 5:10, 7:20, 9:40 DTS

Big R Supercenter METRO EAST

682-8193/99 / 682-8280

Cinema	Movie	Times
1	DUPLEX	10:50, 12:50, 3:50, 4:50, 6:50, 9:00
2	COLD MOUNTAIN	10:30, 12:15, 3:00, 5:45, 9:00 SDDS
3	KUYA	11:20, 1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 9:00
4	U-BELT	10:50, 12:20, 2:50, 4:40, 6:50, 9:00
5	WATER DEMON	11:35, 2:00, 4:25, 6:50, 9:15
6	SOMETHING GOTTA GIVE	10:20, 12:30, 3:20, 6:10, 9:00
7	MILAN	10:35, 1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 9:00 DTS
8	GHOST HOUSE	10:05, 1:20, 3:55, 6:30, 9:05

Big R Supercenter NOVALICHES / FAIRVIEW

935-3229 / 31

Cinema	Movie	Times
1	DUPLEX	11:25, 1:15, 3:05, 4:55, 6:45, 8:35
2	WATER DEMON	11:40, 1:45, 3:50, 5:55, 8:10
3	KUYA	11:45, 1:55, 4:05, 6:15, 8:30
4	U-BELT	11:40, 1:45, 3:50, 5:55, 8:10
5	MILAN	12:10, 2:50, 5:30, 8:30
6	COLD MOUNTAIN	11:30, 2:30, 5:30, 8:30
7	SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE	11:20, 1:35, 3:50, 6:05, 8:30
8	GHOST HOUSE	11:55, 2:40, 5:25, 8:30

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1	WATER DEMON
2	MILAN
3	KUYA
4	U-BELT

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1	DUPLEX
2	MILAN
3	U-BELT
4	GHOST HOUSE

Big R Supercenter STA. ROSA

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1	MILAN
2	HAUNTED OFFICE
3	KUYA
4	U-BELT
5	A GOOD LAWYER'S WIFE

Big R Supercenter LIPA

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1	HAUNTED MANSION
2	KUYA
3	WISHING STAIRS
4	MILAN
5	RUNAWAY JURY

Big R Supercenter DASMARIÑAS

852-2125

1	KUYA
2	WISHING STAIRS
3	RUNAWAY JURY
4	COLD MOUNTAIN
5	MILAN

Big R Supercenter STARMILLS

575-1927 / 961-5270

1	CHASING LIBERTY
2	GOOD LAWYER'S WIFE
3	KUYA
4	MILAN
5	DUPLEX
6	21 GRAMS

IMUS

471-8188 / 875-5858

1	MILAN
2	U-BELT
3	DUPLEX
4 DTS	SOMETHING GOTTA GIVE
5	WATER DEMON
6	KUYA

BACOLOD

441-0458/59

1	DUPLEX
2	HAUNTED MANSION
3	MILAN
4	CHASING LIBERTY
5	KUYA
6	THE GATHERING

ILOILO

336-8070/78

1	HAUNTED MANSION
2	CHASING LIBERTY
3	MILAN
4	IN THE CUT
5	KUYA
6	UNDER THE TUSCAN SUN

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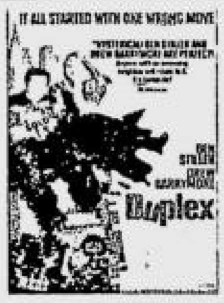

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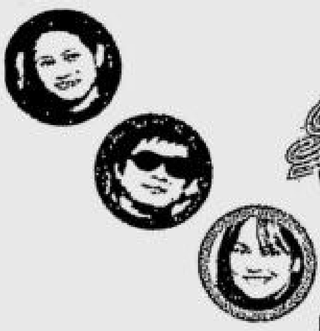

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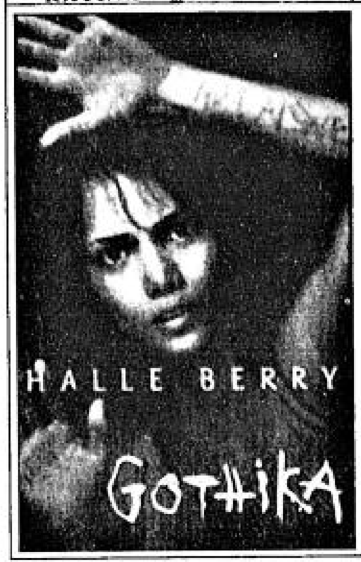

HALLE BERRY
GOTHIKA

MTRCB RATING ▶ R-13 Strictly for 13 years of age and up

Ghost story is "scary as hell"

Vengeful ghost in 'GOTHIKA'

"Because she is dead doesn't mean she's gone...".

Academy Award®-winner Halle Berry stars in Columbia Pictures' spine-chilling horror thriller as Dr. Miranda Grey, a criminal psychologist who awakens to find herself a patient in her own mental institution with no memory of the murder she's apparently committed. Haunted by a vengeful female ghost, Miranda must find out if she is being led farther from her sanity or closer to the truth. *GOTHIKA* also stars Robert Downey Jr. and Penelope Cruz.

Bring the barkada & scream all you can! OPENS MAR 3

Separating potential stars from the madding crowd

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

ON LAST Tuesday's "American Idol" on the Star World Channel, the semi-finalist group of 87 surviving singers was further down to 57.

To do this, the three judges asked the semi-finalists to perform in groups of three. The first trio of talents to sing came from Hawaii, and they delighted the judges.

This heartened the jurors and prompted them to hope that the others would do as well. Unfortunately, the auditions soon bogged down, as singers forgot lyrics, lost their nerve, or simply couldn't get their act together as performers.

The guys appeared to be making more mistakes than the female semi-finalists, forcing a juror to exclaim that his Top 12 would probably be made up exclusively of women!

However, the final outcome wasn't as grim as he had threatened it would be, and quite a number of men were included in the group of 57 that remained after the penultimate round.

The next challenge was to winnow that number down to an even more exclusive 32. The young singers were made to sing solo, with full-performance flourishes.

It was clearly what the three "sadistic" jurors were after: not just an outstanding voice and good looks, but also unique personality, love for performing, edgy risk-taking, and the magic "X-factor" that separates stars from the madding crowd of mediocre performers.

If the contestant had these stellar traits, he would survive. If he didn't, it was time to go home!

Viewers understand and accept this, but some take exception to the sarcastic and humiliating comments the jurors make about some of the auditionees.

Young people shouldn't be subjected to so many insults, they protest—especially not on TV, in front of viewers!

On the other hand, others see this "tough love" approach as part of the star-discovery process. The entertainment field is fiercely competitive, so only the truly focused and determined can make their mark in it.

Still, the excessive bitchiness still rankles. Last Tuesday, juror **Simon Cowell**, the most sarcastic member of the audition panel, laid himself wide open to further criticism when he told a contestant, "If you sing like that in a karaoke bar, they'll turn the power off."

He was criticized because he had said exactly the same thing to another contestant a few days before! So it came clear that he thought up some of his quotable insults in advance, instead of coming up with them spontaneously.

His problem was, he had forgotten that he had already used that line before—and his goose was effectively cooked!

For our part, we've been keeping an eye on a Fil-Am contestant, **Camille Velasco**, as she moves up the ladder in the competition. We singled her out in our column last week, and it turns out that she's doing very well, indeed. Word from the States has it that she's now one of the 12 remaining contestants. Camille is great to listen to and look at, so let's hope she wins!

Japanese filmfest

THE JAPAN Foundation presents this year's Eiga Sai Japanese film festival from March 2 to 13 at the UP Film Institute and the Cultural Center of the Philippines. Screening schedule:

At UP: March 2 at 7 p.m., "Sanjuro." March 3 at 3 p.m., "Life and Opinion of Masseur Ichi." 6 p.m., "Samurai Banners." March 4 at 3 p.m., "When the Rain Lifts." 6 p.m., "Dixieland Daimyo." March 5 at 3 p.m., "Dixieland Daimyo." 6 p.m., "When the Rain Lifts." March 6 at 3 p.m., "Sanjuro." 6 p.m., "Life and Opinion of Masseur Ichi." Admission is free. Call 811-6155.

Theater Arts workshops

FROM April 13 to May 8, Peta will hold these Theater Arts workshops: Children's Theater 1 (6 to 8 years old). Children's Theater 2 (7 to 12 years old). Teen Theater (13 to 17 years old). Basic Acting (17 years and older). Filipino Improvisational Theater (17 years and older). Call 724-9637.

'Madz's Greatest Hits'

THE PHILIPPINE Madrigal Singers will perform in a special concert, "Madz's Greatest Hits," at 8 p.m. on March 14 at the Philamlife Auditorium.

The Madz is the only Philippine choir and the second Asian choral group to win the European Grand Prix of Choral Singing, considered the toughest and most prestigious choral competition in the world. Call (0916)3985281.

'Brother Bear'

HAILED as one of the best animated features shown last year, "Brother Bear" has come out with its soundtrack album on Walt Disney Records. Most of the songs are written and performed by **Phil Collins**.

New show advocates animal rights

From page C1

The following day, Lem and Espie got together with their team at the office to brainstorm some more. The team includes Rolly Perez, production and post production director; Hector Lopez, technical facilities manager; chief writer Miray Lozada and writer Bridget Ng.

And thus "Pet.Ko," which premiered last Sunday on GMA 7, was born.

Pet lover

The show's talent is young TonyPet Gaba, an alumnus of Repertory Philippines and the Kundirana choir of De La Salle, a TV assistant director, commercial model, and an endorser of the Bonamine Biyahilo series. A pet lover, Gaba is also well qualified to play the role of the pet owner (also named TonyPet). He lives with his grandmother in a Quezon City house filled with dogs and cats.

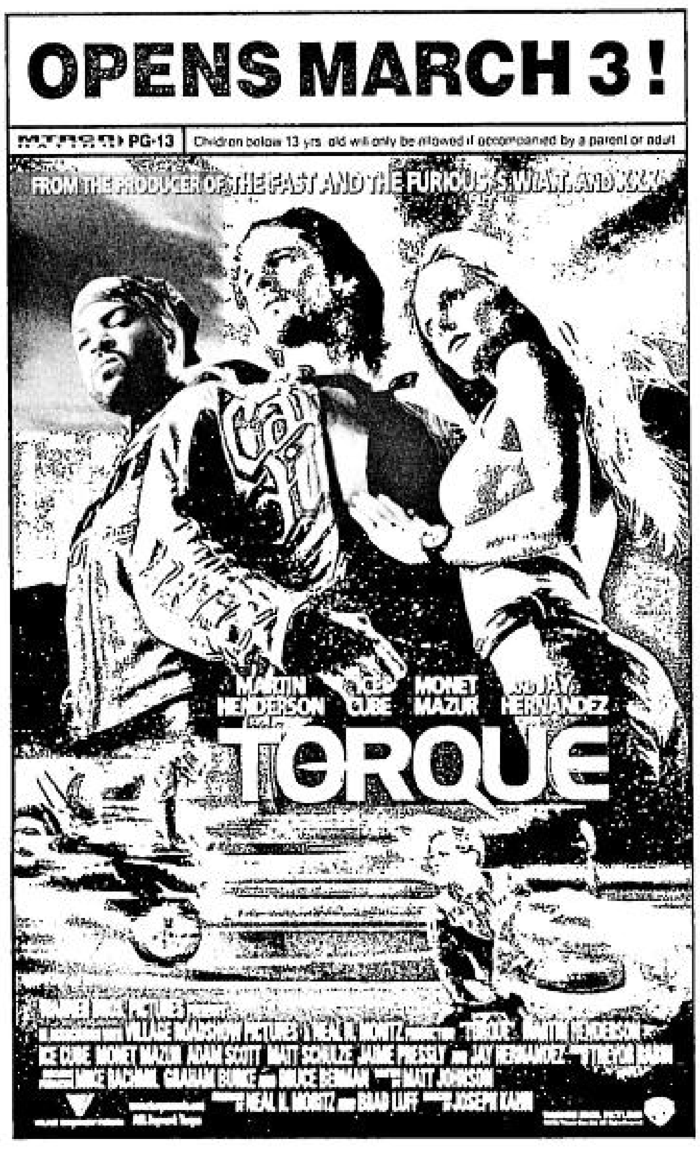
"Pet.Ko" is now a regular Sunday feature (7-7:30 am) of Channel 7. The first episode was entitled "Tonypet Gets Kai" and the second is billed "Tonypet Goes to the Vet." At first, Gaba's character is a reluctant pet owner, but as the weekly series progresses he gets to love Kai and other pets, to care for them, and to appreciate the animal kingdom.

Unseen pets

Kai is Tonypet's first pet, a dog. But the viewers will not see him on the screen. Kai will remain unseen, along with the other pets that will be added to TonyPet's menagerie, like a cat, an aquarium fish, a bird, and so on.

"He has an imaginary zoo at the end!" laughs Espie. Why is he invisible? "Because you cannot shoot with a live pet," she points out. "You can if the animal is trained, but all those long hours will be torture for him."

"It is a device to be kind to the animals, to enhance the imagination," observes Gaba. "It's a good tool."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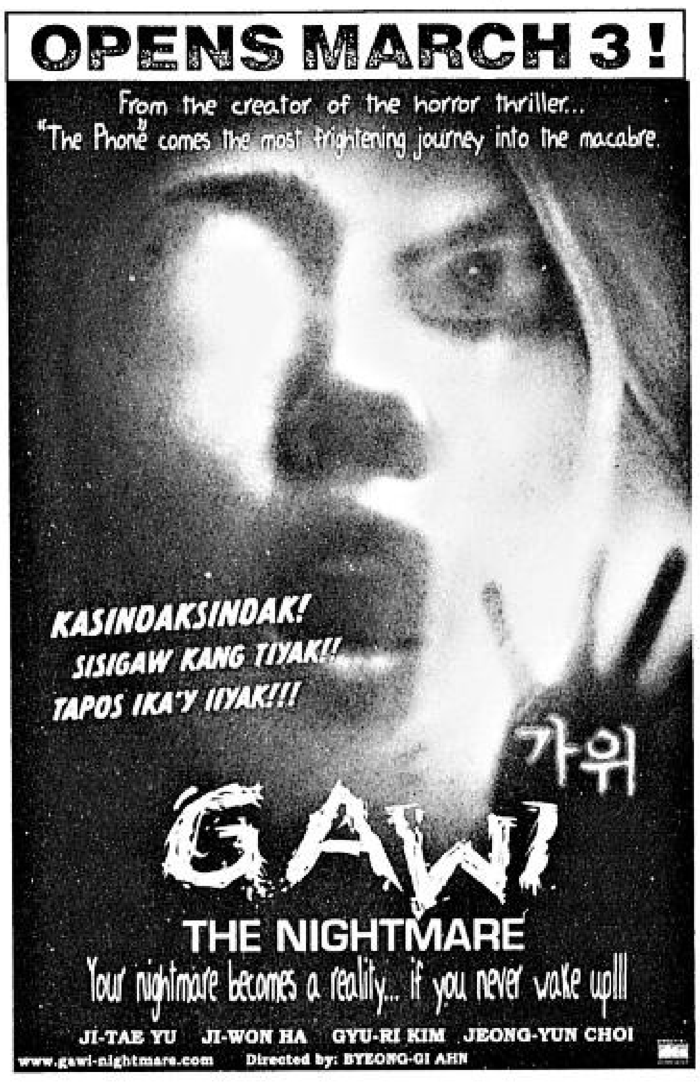
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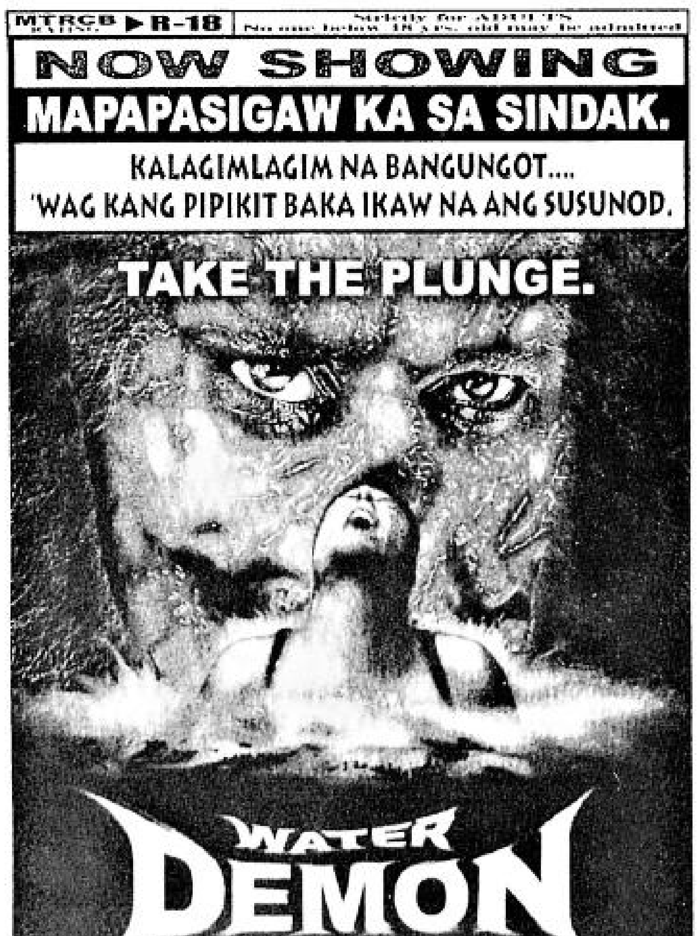
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Regine, Gary V, Rico J shows

Songbird repeat

THE FIRST back-to-back concert of Asia's Songbird, Regine Velasquez, and hitmaker Ogie Alcasid will have a repeat on March 12, 8 p.m., at the Araneta Coliseum.

Regine sings the cult hit "Spaghetti Song" with the Sex Bomb, while Ogie performs with the Viva Hot Babes a song and dance number featuring Bayani Agbayani's "Ocho-Ocho" and "Bulaklak."

Two of today's hottest new artists complete the lineup: "Star for A Million" champ Sarah Geronimo and "Star In A Million" grand prize winner Erik Santos.

Produced by Viva Concerts and line produced by Aria Productions, "The Songbird and the Songwriter . . . Journey of Love . . . Music to Remember" has Raul Mitra as musical director and Louie Ignacio as director for TV. Stage direction is by Regine and Ogie.

Tickets at P200, P500, P750, P1,500, P2,000 and P2,500 are now available at all SM Ticketnet outlets and at the Araneta Ticketnet. For inquiries, call Viva Concerts at 687-5853 or 687-1125.

Special Olympics

GARY Valenciano will sing the Philippine National Anthem in the simple opening ceremonies of the annual Special Olympics at the Marikina Sports Complex on March 3 at 3 p.m.

The closing ceremonies will be graced by screen and television luminaries. There will be a musical program to cheer the 600 special athletes attending the national sporting event.

Winners of the sports competitions in the meet will represent the country in the next Special Olympics World Games to be held in Shanghai, China.

Rock's Hard Rock

RICO J. Puno and RJ Jacinto top bill Rock's Hard Rock, a concert by Hard Rock Café and the Makati Police Foundation, to be held on March 3.

Two hours of nonstop rock and OPM hits as well as standard classics and some of today's charttoppers await the audience.

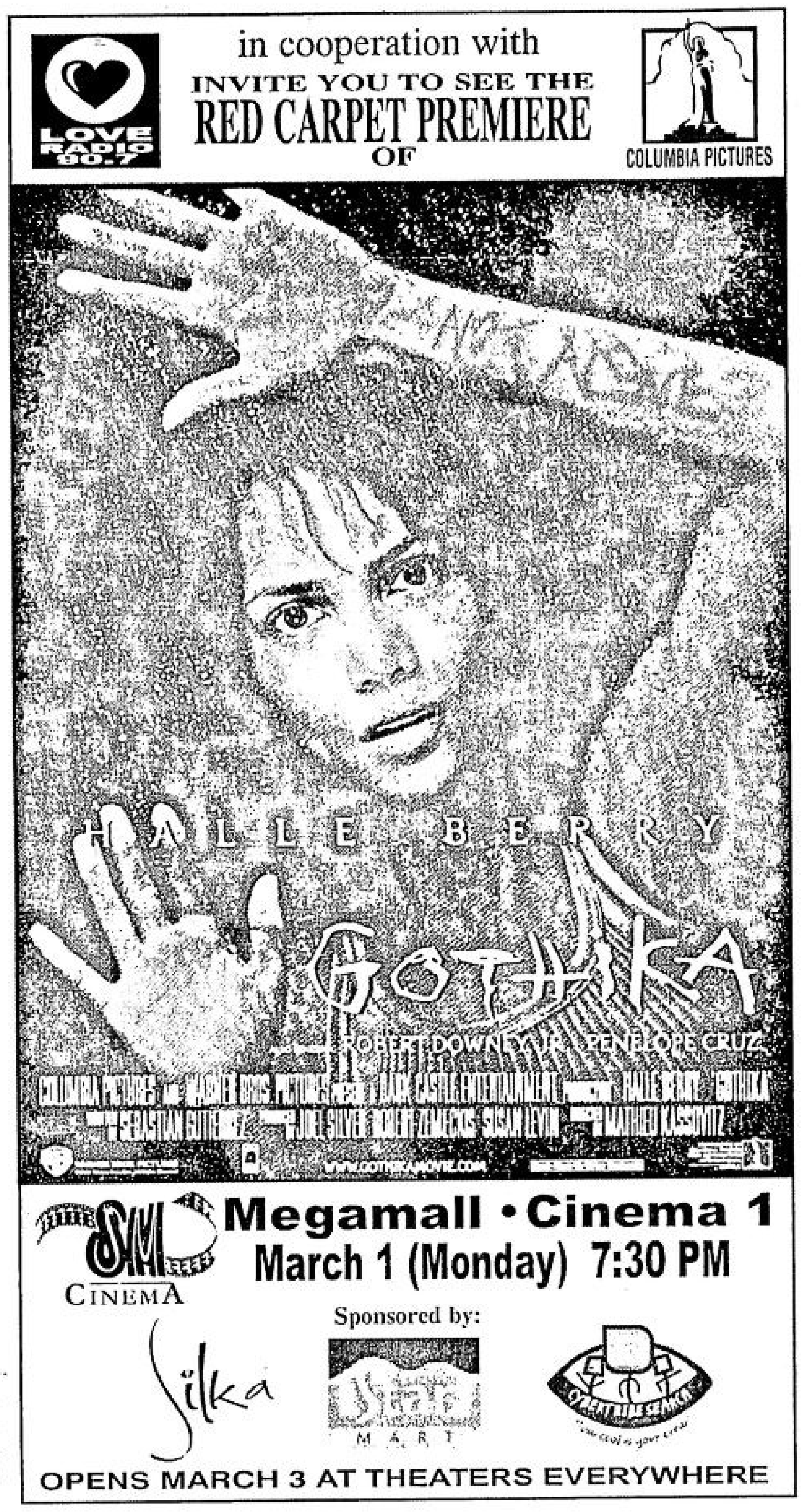
Special guests are Arnel Pineda and Tosca.

For reservations, call Hard Rock Café at 893-4661 to 64.

Fegi in Himig 2004

SINGER Anna Fegi teams up with Himig Handog winner Arnel de Pano for ABS-CBN's Himig Handog Love Songs 2004, which airs at 9 p.m. on March 5.

Fegi then joins forces with concert producer-director Manolet Garcia for her fifth anniversary concert, "Anna Fegi: Stage and Screen," at 8:30 p.m. on March 20 at the Philamlife Theater.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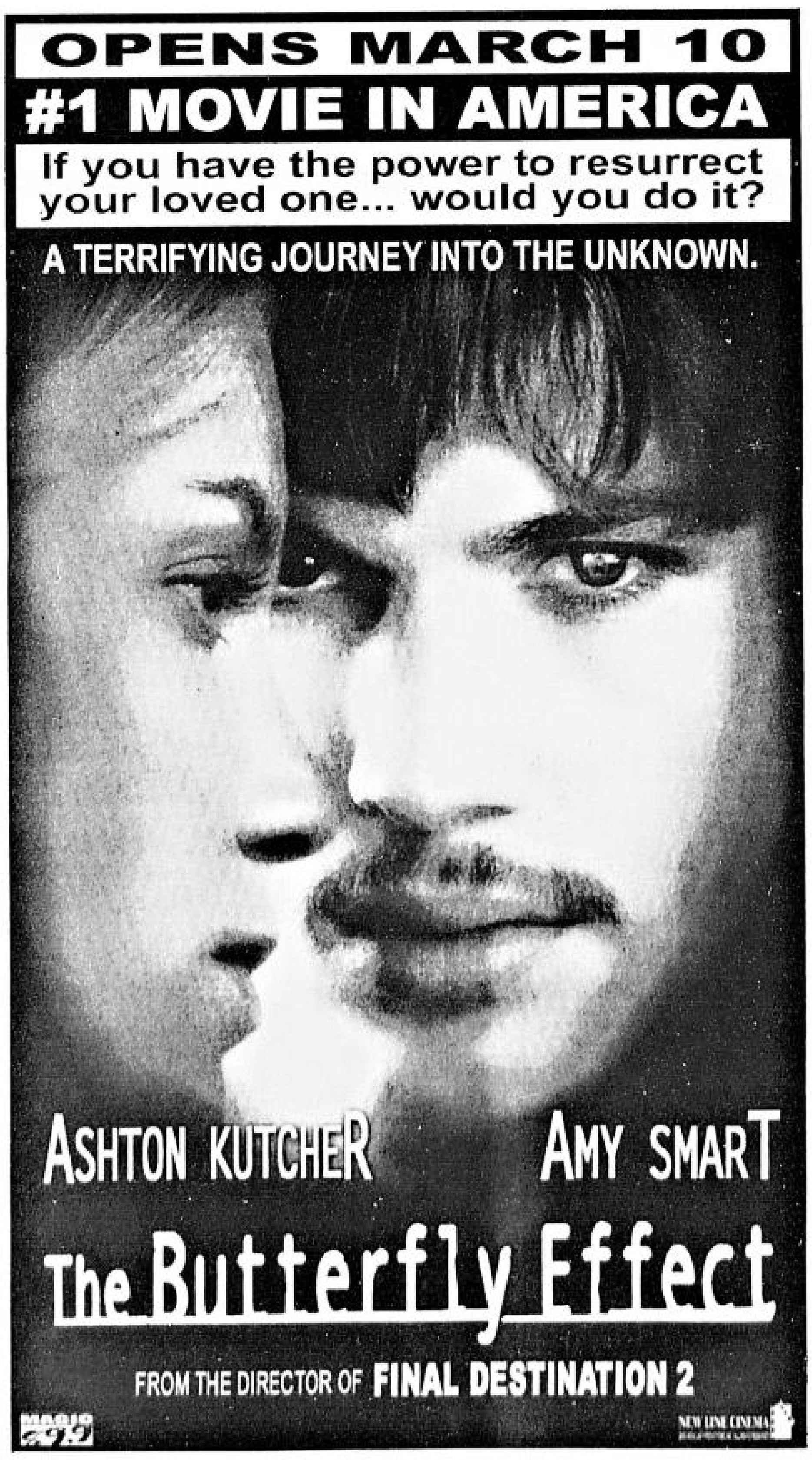
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A film that will remind you that "LOVE IS ALL AROUND."
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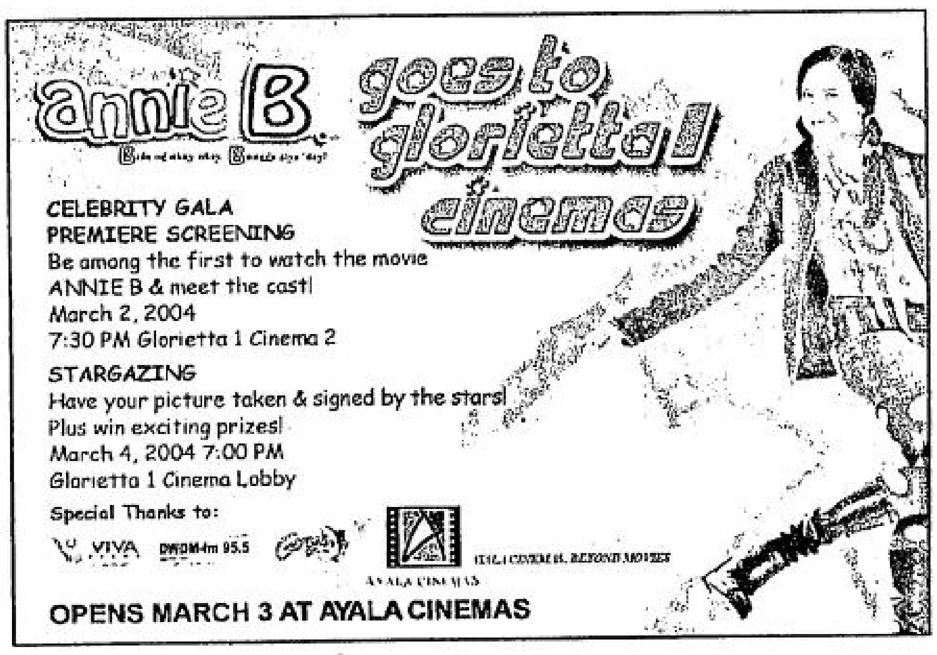

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STAR
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COSTNER

Costner defends 'Passion'

NEW YORK—Kevin Costner said people "shouldn't be attacking" Mel Gibson for "The Passion of the Christ" in an interview on the syndicated entertainment TV show "Access Hollywood."

"We shouldn't be attacking a filmmaker like Mel Gibson who, number one, is an honorable filmmaker . . . and probably questioned himself more than anybody even knows. So, like leave him alone," the 49-year-old director-actor said.

The film, starring Jim Caviezel as Jesus, is a bloody depiction of Christ's final hours and crucifixion.

Some Christian and Jewish leaders have complained the movie could fuel anti-Semitism by implying Jews were collectively responsible for Christ's death.

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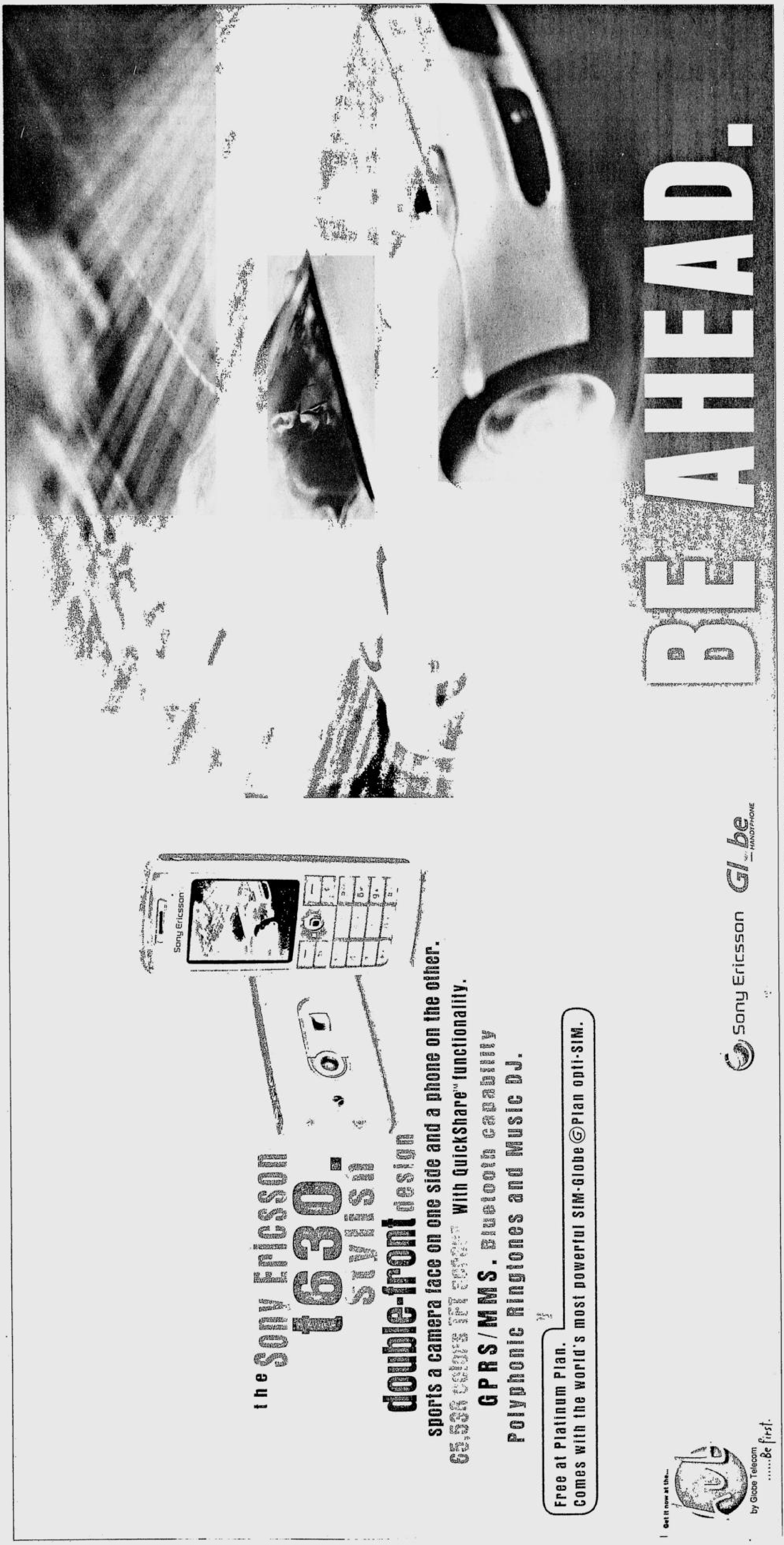
Ducks Unlimited stores are located at Rustan's Cubao, Rustan's Harrison, Glorietta 3 in Makati, Robinson's Place Ermita, Robinson's Galleria, Landmark, Shoppesville, Greenhills, Ali Mall, SM Cubao and Festival Mall Alabang.



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RED-HOT MAMAS. (From left) Sheila Francisco, Mitch Valdes, Leah Navarro and Nanette Inventor star in "Menopause, The Musical," opening March 5 at the Music Museum.

From hot flashes to hot babes

A musical mentions the unmentionable: 'Menopause'

By Gibbs Cadiz

THEY'RE still not topics of polite conversation, and mention of them often brings mincing, embarrassed replies. But make no mistake about it: Body parts and functions are the new theater chic.

"The Vagina Monologues" is raking it in worldwide. "Urinetown" is a certified Broadway hit. In the UK and Australia, there's a show called "Puppetry of the Penis" that leaves its audience (mostly women) gasping in shock and glee.

Now comes a show that promises to break another taboo: a musical about menopause, that mysterious milestone in every woman's life that pop psychologist Gail Sheehy once called "the silent passage."

But this time, "Menopause, The Musical," with book and lyrics by Jeanie Linders, is making sure the passage will be anything but silent.

"In my generation, it was a topic not talked about," says Leo Rialp, who's directing the local version of the New York musical that's set to open on March 5 at the Music Museum.

"We were taught in our time that menopause was already the end of a woman's life," chimes in Mitch Valdes, who's playing one of the show's four main characters. "They lock you up in your duster—*mag-aalaga ka na lang ng* grandchildren—and they throw the key away!"

Laughter greets that broadside. And some gulps. True, "we have a very youth-oriented society," says Leah Navarro, another castmember. "When you reach a certain age, you're not allowed to look good, to feel good about yourself, and to have sex."

"Mature women are often forgotten in this country," she continues. "Many stores still don't sell clothes that fit us, even if we're supposed to have more disposable income than those 18-year-olds who still need to ask mom and dad for their *baon*."

By fit, of course, she means plus sizes. Weight gain, indeed, is a common enough occurrence among folks reaching middle age. But hot flashes? Mood swings? Eating binges? Night sweats? Memory loss?

That's when you know you've arrived at menopause. And boy, "things are going to get a lot worse before they get worse," so warned Lily Tomlin, only half-jokingly.

Cessation

"Menopause is technically the cessation of menstruation, and 50 percent of women usually have it at 45-50 years of age," explains Dr. Evelyn Palaypayon of the Philippine Society of Climacteric Medicine (PSCM). (The group, composed of doctors specializing in female health concerns, is supporting the local production as a way to promote information about menopause.)

"Menopause is something that should not be feared," adds Dr. Sylvia Carnero, PSCM president. "It is simply a transitionary period that women should prepare for."

As most transitions go, this one takes the gold standard for difficulty. Many women go through it unprepared for the physiological and psychological changes that can happen to them.

Valdes again: "I went through the whole textbook of menopause, including insanity, so I didn't have to act at all to play the character."

The musical takes this entire textbook of aggravations and magnifies, parodies and celebrates them with music that takes off from the biggest radio hits of the '60s and '70s, the very era of the baby-boomer audience the musical hopes to knock out.

That's right, the music is not original. They're re-lyricised versions of 28 chart classics such as "Only You," "I Heard It Through the Grapevine," "Chain of Fools," "Staying Alive" and "Wishin' and Hopin'."

"Staying Alive," then, becomes "Staying Awake," a song that bemoans sleeplessness and fatigue ("Well, you can tell by the way I slump my walk/I'm a tired girl; no strength to talk/In the mirror, my eyes so red/I've been up all night, sittin' in my bed.")

FROM/ D4

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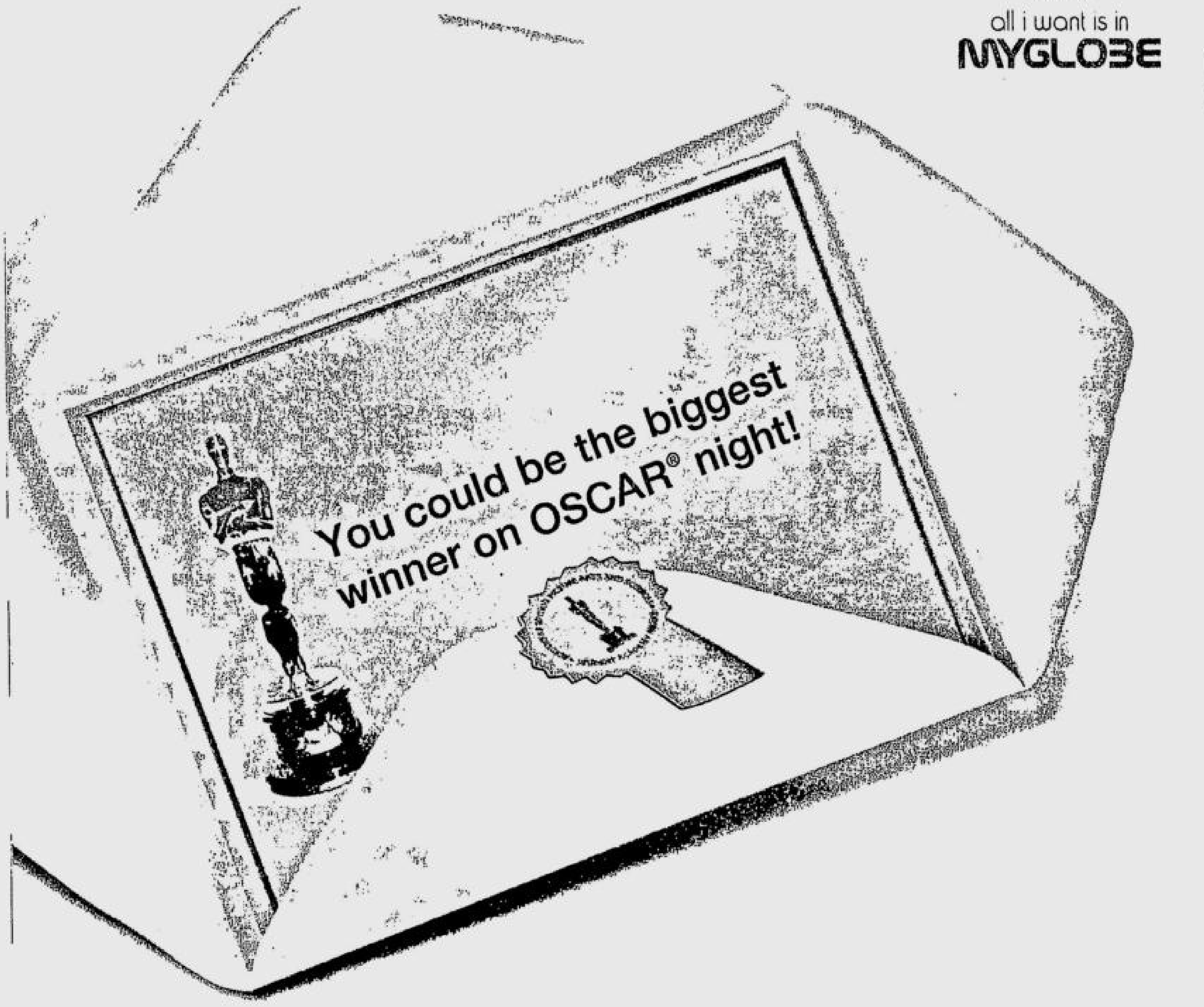
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Charlize Theron now enjoys the Oscar goodie bag. Reportedly the most luxurious in the Academy Awards history, with 4 tickets to Celine Dion's concert and $9,000 in spending money at the hotel.

GLOBE
Mon-Fri 6:30pm on RPN9

Renee Zellweger may soon be basking at either the ulta-private resort or the Auberge du Soleil. A $4,000 getaway is just one of the tidbits in this year's Oscar Gift Basket.

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THE MASTER ON FILM

Thoroughly modern Victorio Edades

By Constantino C. Tejero

THE LIFE of Victorio Edades might not be as dramatic as the life of Van Gogh, Frida Kahlo or Pollock; but it was no less epochal—to the Philippine art world, at least.

The man is, in fact, considered the Father of Philippine Modern Art. And it was this spirit of revolution that served as impetus to drive Nick Deocampo into filming the docudrama "Edades."

The film has had its world premiere on Feb. 15 during the 11th Pelikula at Lipunan at SM Megamall in Mandaluyong City, and was next shown at SM Iloilo last week.

It is now touring the country from north to south during the provincial legs of the festival, in SM Baguio (March 2-6), SM Cebu (March 19-20), SM Davao (April 23-24), as well as in Zamboanga and Pangasinan.

The film's opening sequence is a prologue of still shots introducing the 13 Moderns, the artists who revolutionized 20th-century Philippine art. These were the first-generation modernists, who grouped in 1938: the first triumvirate of Edades, Galo B. Ocampo and Carlos Francisco; then Diosdado Lorenzo, José Pardo, Demetrio Diego, Ricarte Purugganan, Vicente Manansala, H.R. Ocampo, Bonifacio Cristobal, Cesar Legaspi, Arsenio Capili and Anita Magsaysay.

The enigmatic opening scene shows a white-covered bed on a seashore in the twilight, with an old man in a stately walk, and a boy flying a kite across the seascape. Goldenly lit, the shot captures the artist as dreamer and master.

WITH wife Jean (Marra Benitez), listening to news of Liberation

Dramatic highlights

The film then traces Edades' life and times, from his birth in 1895 and childhood in Barrio Bolosan, Dagupan, Pangasinan, through high school in Lingayen; his lonely years as an architecture and fine arts student at University of Washington in Seattle; summer work in Alaska's salmon canneries; his return to Manila with American wife Jean and only child Joan; the rejection of his first exhibit in the country; the rejection of his teaching application at University of the Philippines; his founding of the University of Santo Tomas Departments of Architecture and Fine Arts in the 1930s; the fierce debate with the conservatives represented by sculptor Guillermo Tolentino and genre painter Fernando Amorsolo; brief sojourns in Paris and Rome; the war years and Liberation; his imprisonment as a Japanese collaborator, followed by years of deprivation; the rediscovery of his art and the patronage of First Lady Imelda Marcos in the '70s; until his retirement in Davao and death in 1985.

Dramatic highlights include the day he first encountered modern European art in the traveling exhibit of the Armory show in 1922, and the rejection by both public and critics of his historic exhibit in the Philippine Columbian Club in 1928. These scenes are reenacted with almost wide-eyed suspense.

Deocampo's technique is a happy blend of reenactment, actual footage (shot in amateur super-8 film), archival footage, photographs, animation, interviews, video and digital effects. The unconventional technique reflects the iconoclastic spirit that imbues the art and life of the subject.

Levels of history

The film was produced by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, specifically the Committee on Galleries supported by Galleria Duemila's Silvana Diaz, Gallery Genesis' Araceli Salas, and Liongoren Gallery's Norma Liongoren. Subtitled "Victorio C. Edades and Modernism in Philippine Art," it is out to clarify certain points of nationhood.

As the information sheet says, it is meant to address "three levels of history: Edades' personal history; the country's political history, paralleling the growth of Filipino identity in art; and the evolution of art history, as modernism struggled to supplant classicism."

Edades was proclaimed National Artist for Painting in 1976, for "changing the direction of Philippine painting decisively, ending the parochial isolation of Philippine art and placing it in the mainstream of international culture."

The dramatization of his biography is contextualized and, in the process, explained by interviews with art historians and critics Alice Guillermo and Patrick Flores, artists Jaime de Guzman and Danny Dalena (Edades' former students in UST), and gallery owner Odette Alcantara.

INTERNATIONAL EX
OF
MODERN

THE YOUNG artist (played by Mon Confiado) comes face to face with modern European art for the first time.

Thus, for the lay person and the common viewer, the growth and development of Philippine modernism in art has been clarified by the film, in no small ways aided by the script of Lydia Rivera Ingle, the lucid narration of Boots Anson Roa, and a profuse photomontage of artworks.

What's admirable about Deocampo's filmmaking is that, the film doesn't turn off the viewer with sheer academicism at all. Average moviegoers go to have some fun, and that they get, plus a generous serving of intellectual and spiritual nourishment.

Cultural significance

The boy Victorio is played with raw energy by Von Ryan Quinto, an out-of-school youth and pedicab driver the filmmaker discovered in Edades' birthplace.

Mon Confiado plays the artist as a young man, while printmaker Pandy Aviado (another Edades student) plays the postwar artist. Aviado acts like a Zen master.

The most convincing performance is rendered, understandably, by Confiado, as he is the only professional actor of the three. He gives some intensity to the rôle, particularly during moments of internal struggle.

The editing by Emmanuel Dadivas is effective, as is the painterly cinematography by Yam Laranas.

A masterstroke is the section on the debate between the conservatives and the moderns, done in frenetic animation with hilarious word balloons to the rendition of "Three Little Maids from School," that flirty song trio from "The Mikado." This humanizes the polemics.

The musical scoring of Noel Cabangon is at its most haunting in the opening scene, the closing scene, and the penultimate scene (when the conferment of National Artist is being read by a voice-over, as blood-red rose petals drift slowly across the screen).

This is an important film—a must-see not only for artists, art students, cinéastes and art lovers, but also for ordinary moviegoers so they'd get an inkling of this extraordinary life and take pride in being Filipino: how a brown boy from the barrio went out to the world and helped in putting his country on the map of the art world.

'Museum Hopping' in Singapore

THE ASIA-EUROPE Foundation (Japan Trust Fund), in cooperation with the National Heritage Board and British Museum, is hosting a corporate and media development event for the Asia-Europe Museum (Asemus) Network, titled "Museum Hopping," at the Asian Civilizations Museum in Singapore on March 5.

"Museum Hopping" will preview the highlights of the Asemus activities and provide interaction between museum specialists in Asia and Europe.

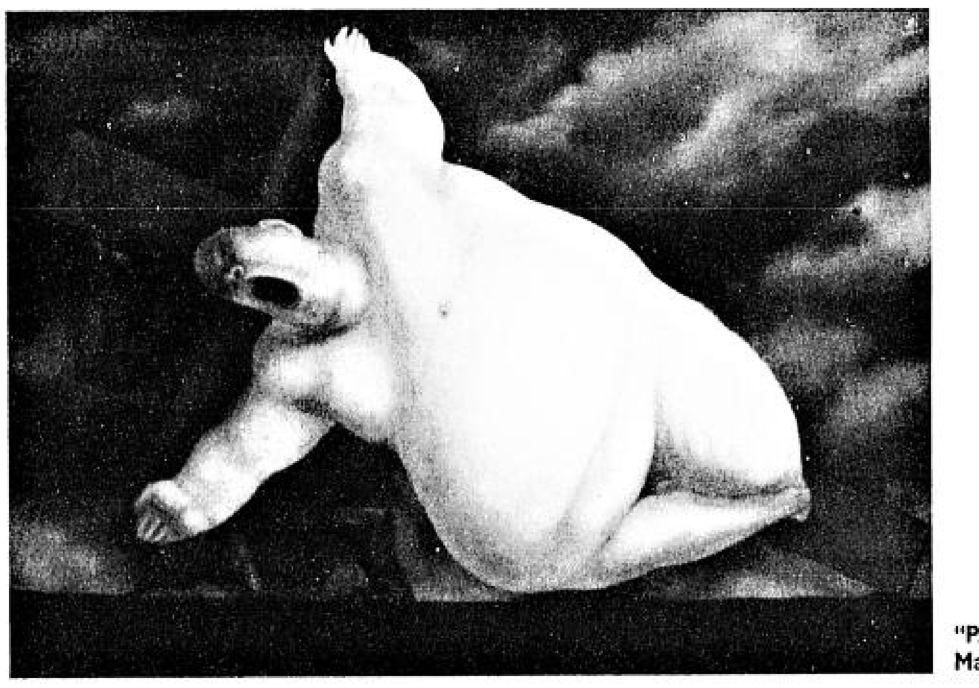
The exhibition will feature Asemus activities on museum education and public program, the Peranakan Research Project, records of the hidden base of Borobodur, exchanging cultural information on West Sumatra, unearthing Philippine pasts in European museums, exchange of techniques to preserve shared heritage, traveling exhibition and virtual exhibition.

Lee Boon Yang, Singapore minister for information, communication and the arts, will open the event. Manus Brinkman, secretary general of the International Council of Museum, Paris, will be the guest of honor from Europe.

Over 30 well-known and highly respected museum professionals from 14 countries will be coming to Singapore to attend this event, including the Philippine National Museum's Cora Alvina.

Since its establishment in 2000 in Stockholm, with the support of Asef, Asemus continues to address asymmetry in museum collections. It has since grown into a network of more than 70 leading museum institutions from both continents.

RIDGEPOINTE Ballet Conservatoire Inc., in cooperation with Miriam College, presents "Not Cracked," a children's adaptation of E.T.A. Hoffman's "The Nutcracker," with direction, libretto and choreography by Katherine Sanchez and Johanna Enerio. This is the 14th-season offering of Miriam Ballet, under the artistic direction of Liza de la Fuente- Castañeda. It goes onstage at the Teatro Aguinaldo on March 6, 7 p.m., with matinee performances, at the Miriam Cafetorium. Also to be shown are "Road to Nirvana" (a prayer suite by Tony Fabella), "Nala" (a solo by Kit Sanchez), "Alay kay Nanay (after Mañosa)," "Mademoiselle de Notredame (Panaslukov after Burmeister)" and "All that Jazz." Call 0919-4545441.



"PASAN," by Mark Justiniani

Art reflecting grace at the Ateneo Gallery

THE ATENEO Art Gallery presents "Experiencing Grace," an inaugural end-of-term yearend exhibition organized by Janine Cabato, the first graduating student of Ateneo de Manila University's newest degree program—Bachelor of Fine Arts, Major in Art Management.

The visual narrative of "Experiencing Grace" makes use of the Catholic concept of God's all-pervading presence and unmerited gift of self to mankind.

Works selected from the Gallery's permanent collection as reflections of this theme include: Edgar Talusan Fernandez's abstract diptych "Angles of Life" (1975), "Piitan" (1998) by Alfredo Esquillo, "Capsules of the Mind" (1978) by Prudencio Lamarroza, "Sari-Sari" (1965) by Antonio Austria and Alfonso Ossorio's "Clouds of Conscience" (ca. 1956).

The exhibit also unveils the gallery's newly acquired artworks—all gifts from patrons, Ateneo alumni and artists.

These are "Pasan" (2000), oil on canvas by Mark Justiniani, "Commentary on the Apocalypse" (1970), color lithograph by Ofelia Gelvezon-Tequi; "Si Philippa, Ang Ina Kong Prokyures" (1993), oil on canvas by Virtusio Gil Juan de los Reyes; an untitled ballpen drawing (1975) by Rod. Paras-Perez; "Fluvial Procession" (ca. 1960) a copper engraving plate by Manuel Rodriguez, Sr., Roberto Chabet's "Black Sea, Silver Mood" (1964), gouache and collage on paper, "In medias res" (1968), collograph by Ray Albano; and "Winged Tikbalang" (2000), a brass sculpture by Solomon Saprid.

The exhibit runs until May 22. The Ateneo Art Gallery is located at the Ground Floor, Rizal Library, Ateneo de Manila University, Katipunan Avenue, Loyola Heights, QC.

Admission is free. Call 4366001 local 4160.

New arts scholars named

THE PHILIPPINE High School for the Arts announces its new batch of freshmen scholars for school year 2004-2005.

Ballet: Gequinto, Gilianne Therese; De Guzman, Janesa Rae; Artuz, Michelle Katherine; Arisola, Earl John; Datu, Marinelle; Jamerlan, Angelique; and Winder, Rita Angela.

Creative writing: Bernardez, Ivy Clarize; Alfonso, Sophia; Elona, Ma. Katherine; Abustan, Isabela Louise; and Leonardo, Sophia Vera Marie.

Folk dance: Dimaano, Roxanne Nika; Corpuz, Therese Christianne; Tabao, Rae Angeli; Engle, Lynjo Mae; Garcia, Al Bernard; Estillore Jr., Jose Hermes; and Litan, Jennie.

Music: Sumalde, Angelo Augusto; Gumarang, Foederis; Calinawan, Wence; Montañez, Remely Bianca; and Tantiongco, Mia Ariana.

Theater arts: Lumasag, Jayson; Velecina, Vera; Adda, Emmanuelle; Isidro, Kevin Swhazcy; and Salazar, Sarah Therese.

Visual arts: Soledad, Marvin Jed; De Leon, Dawani; Regalario, Mark Richard; Francisco, Alarice; Bustos, John Jake Lawrence; Valdez, Shekinah Hope; and Garibay, Gwen.

Application forms for next year's search are now available. Call (049) 5365971 to 73 or e-mail phsa@laguna.net

The march is on for **SUPER VALUE SAVINGS**

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Prices good from Monday, March 1 thru Wednesday, March 17, 2004!

MARCH						
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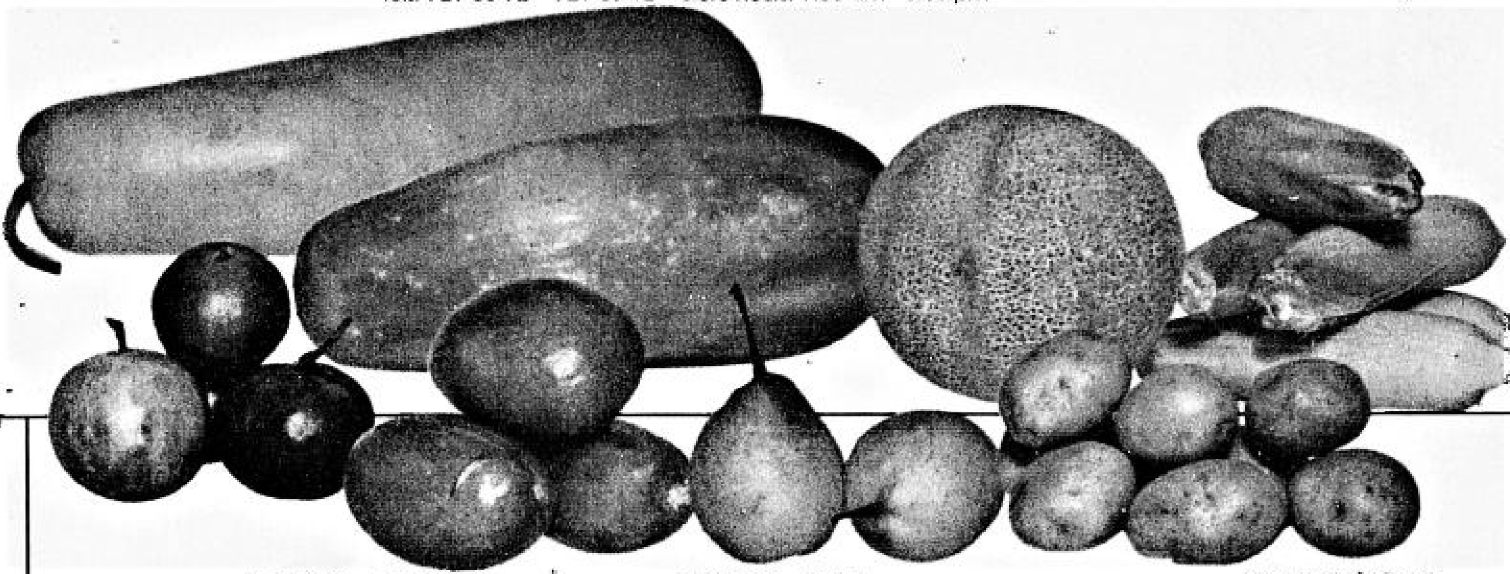
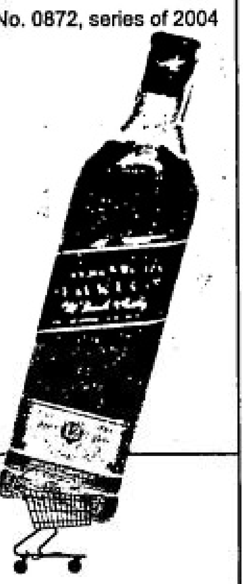
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17			

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0872, series of 2004

Chivas Regal
1L ₱1050.00/bot



Ya Pears ₱33.60/kg • Cantaloupe ₱26.25/kg • Sweet Japanese Corn ₱47.25/kg • Avocado ₱57.75/kg • Star Apple ₱47.50/kg • Upo ₱12.60/pc • Big Papaya ₱52.50/kg • Potatoes Regular ₱23.00/kg



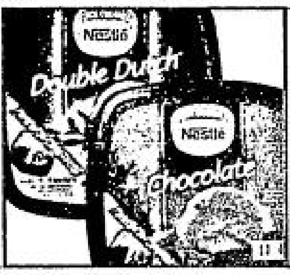
Johnnie Walker Black
70cl ₱780.00/bot
1L ₱1,100.00/bot

Nescafe
Classic Sticks 84/2g P114.20/pk
Classic Refill 50g P25.15/pk
3-in-1 Coffee Mix 24/14g P67.45/pk
12/14g P34.15/box

Purefoods
Chunkee Corned Beef 190g P23.30/can
Chick 'N Tasty Hotdog w/ Cheese
1kg P127.00/bag

Sunkist Power Pack Orange, Apple Grape, Lemon 200ml P6.70/pk
Mango 200ml P7.15/pk
Selecta Full Cream Milk Powder
180g P40.95/pk 400g P88.60/box

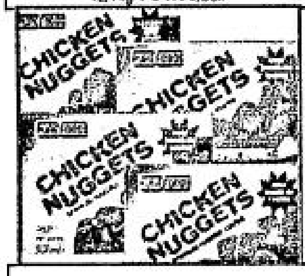
CDO
Corned Beef 150g P14.75/can
175g P17.60/can Bibbo Hotdog Regular
490g P78.50/pk Cocktail 490g P80.75/pk



Nestle Fun Toppings
Classic Chocolate 1.7L P160.50/tub
Supreme Double Dutch
1.7L P188.50/tub

Mama Sita's
Kare-Kare Mix 100g P19.60/pk
Oyster Sauce 397g P45.60/bot
765g P78.40/bot Bbq Marinade
335g P34.60/bot 652g P58.80/bot

Ho-Mi
Pancit Canton Classic, Toyomansi, Chili-Anghang,
Pinoy Beefsteak 65g P4.70/pk



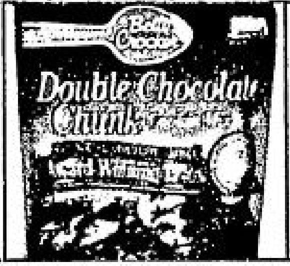
Purefoods
Chicken Nuggets Classic, Cheese, Bbq., Sour Cream, Pizza 230g P45.60/box

Dodo Frozen
Fish Ball 200g P39.50/pk Cuttle Fish Ball,
Prawn Flavored Ball 200g P54.90/pk
Fish Cake 500g P82.00/pk
Lobster Ball, Crab Ball 200g P62.80/pk

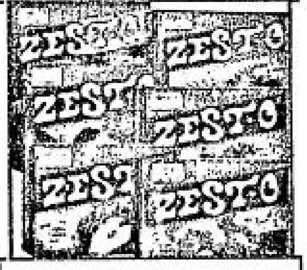
Jose Cuervo Gold
70cl ₱510.00/bot
1L ₱620.00/bot

May
Sparkling Juice Red, White Grape
750ml P102.50/bot
Mistral
Red Wine 750ml P128.00/bot

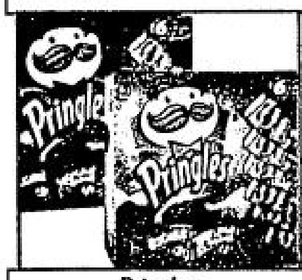
Norwegian
Salmon Fillet Portion P346.50/kg
Stella
Marinated Salmon 300g P148.00/pk



Betty Crocker
Bisquick 567g P80.80/box
Double Choco Chunk Cookies
496g P101.00/box

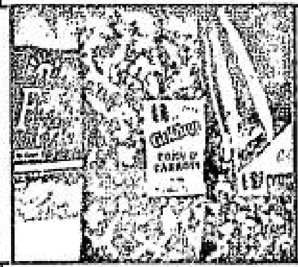


Zesto RTD
Orange, Grape, Guyabano, Pineapple, Strawberry, Iced Tea Lemon, Calamansi 10/200ml P39.80/box

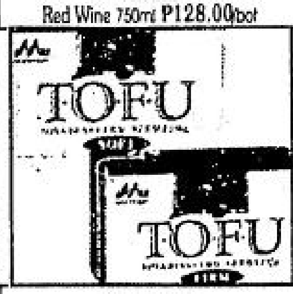


Pringles
Club Pack Big 6's (3's Orig, 3's S&C),
6's (3's Orig, 2's S&C, 1Chse)
P339.00/box

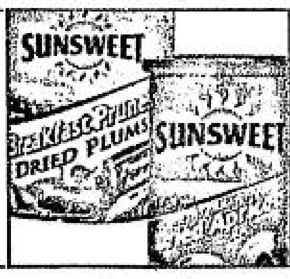
Nabisco
Chips Ahoy Chewy 454g P145.50/box
Premium Cracker Multi Garin
468g P105.50/box



Golden Frozen
Shoestring 2kg P123.10/bag Crinkle Cut
2kg P134.90/bag Green Peas 1kg P80.00/bag
Mixed Vegetables 1kg P87.20/bag Corn Kernel
1kg P97.50/bag Corn & Carrots
1kg P95.60/bag Diced Carrots 1kg P66.70/bag

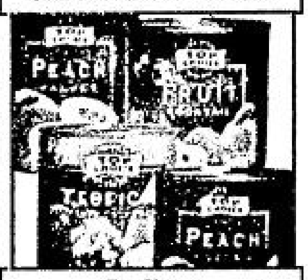


Morinaga
Tofu Firm 297g P60.00/box
Tofu Soft 290g P60.00/box

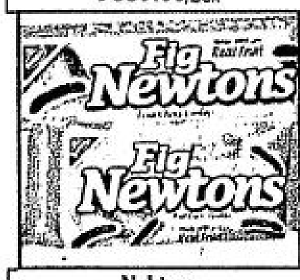


Sunsweet
Dried Apricots 500g P160.00/can
Prunes Carton 510g P74.50/box

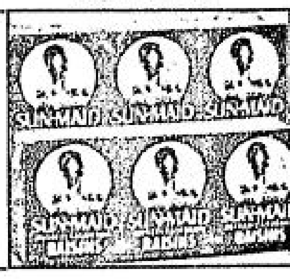
Jolly
Cherries w/ Stem, w/o Stem
737g P189.00/bot
Grass Jelly 540g P20.50/can



Top Choice
Fruit Cocktail 851g P55.00/can
Tropical Fruit Cocktail 850g P41.00/can
Peach Sliced/Halves 825g P54.20/can

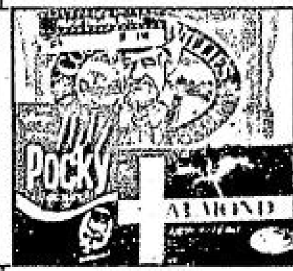


Nabisco
Fig Newtons 227g P65.50/pk
Fat Free, Strawberry
390g P140.50/box



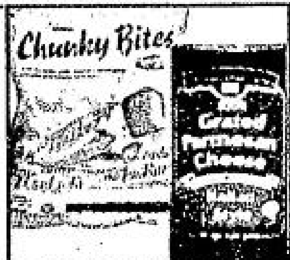
Sun-Maid Raisins
6/43g P56.00/pk

Planters
Peanut Butter Creamy, Crunchy
390g P72.50/bot 610g P100.50/bot
Cheese Ball Cheddar Sour Cream
122g P52.50/bot



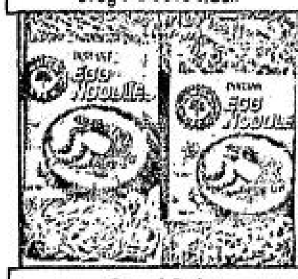
Cousin Willie's
Popcorn Buttery, White Cheddar
Movie Butter 100g P25.00/pk
Glico
Pocky Chocolate 82g P69.00/box
Almond Chocolate 82g P93.00/box

Kewpie
Mayonnaise 500g P145.00/bot
Mitsukan
Hon Mirin 600ml P162.50/bot



Old Fashioned
Grated Parmesan Cheese Italian Style
227g P147.25/can
Vochelle
Chunky Bites Snack 200g P56.50/bag

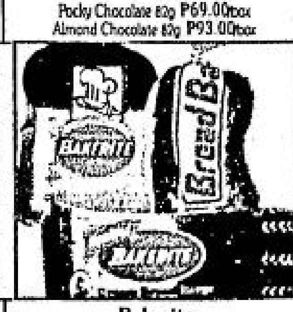
Lipton
Herbal Tea Cinnamon Apple, Quietly Chamomile, Honey Lemon, Ginger Twist, Raspberry 24ct P110.00/box
Flavored Black Tea Honey & Lemon, French Vanilla 24ct P110.00/box



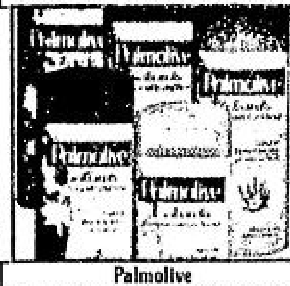
Good Life
Egg Noodles 200g P14.00/pk
400g P23.50/pk

Chan Yee Jai
Almond Paste Powder 454g P171.90/can
Koon Yick
Curry Powder 113g P121.50/bot
225g P222.50/bot

Ragu
CGS Sundried Tomato Sweet Basil
Roasted Red Pepper Onion, Robusto Italian Meat, Parmesan Romano, Robusto Beef Mushroom, Robusto Sauteed Beef
737g P115.[illegible]/bot

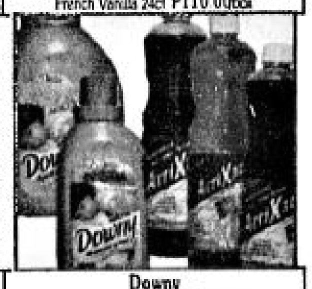


Bakerite
Cream Bread 720g P31.00/loaf
Mega Half Loaf 450g P20.70/loaf
Bread Bar 450g P23.40/loaf



Palmolive
Natural Shampoo, Natural Nourishment, Black & Shine, Deep Moisturizing, Hair & Scalp, Sun Protection
200ml P63.90/bot

Safeguard
Papaya Soap 90g P20.50/box 135g P29.90/box
Pantene
Total Conditioner 100ml P44.30/bot
200ml P86.30/bot



Downy
Mountain Spring 600L P150.00/bot
April Fresh 1.12L P280.00/bot
Arrixaca Floor
Cleaner Floral, Marine 1L P63.40/bot

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From hot flashes to hot babes

From page D1

HEAT WAVE. The musical uses songs from the '60s and '70s to celebrate the lighter side of menopause and baby-boomer life.

"Wishin' and Hopin'" is now "Drippin' and Tricklin,'" "My Guy" is "My Thighs" and "Heat Wave" has become "Hot Flash."

Girl empowerment

The story is about four women—a power executive, an ex-hippie, an aging soap star and an Iowa housewife—who meet in Bloomingdale's and fight over a... bra. They then discover that they have more things in common than love for lingerie.

Girl empowerment for young grandmothers, that's what the show is. But would men be able to relate?

"I think so," says Rialp. "Filipino men are closer to their wives than Western men. When I watched the show in New York, we were only 20 men in an audience of 500 women."

Besides, "our show is funnier than NY's, I think. The choreography is wittier and livelier. The girls sound better, too. They're more willing to be laughed at and to laugh at themselves."

Not surprising, as his cast includes, aside from Valdes and Navarro, Nanette Inventor and Sheila Francisco. Four women of great wit, attitude and power voices—plus, in three out of four, the actual experience to match.

Menopausal? "Not yet," says Francisco. "About to," says Navarro. " "Currently," says Inventor. "Finished!" hoots Valdes.

The show looks set to be a big, fun sisterhood party, but with a few more things in mind than plain laughs.

"It would be nice if a husband watches it and tells his wife after, 'Now I know what you're going through,'" says Navarro.

"Menopause is a shared experience," she adds. "I'm sure everyone has a mom who will or is going through the same thing," and thus can appreciate the show.

Valdes, a mad gleam in her eyes, has more immediate ambitions. "Now we will show that we are still desirable—that we deserve to be coveted more than the Sex Bomb Dancers. Now we can have sex without getting pregnant!"

"Menopause, the Musical," produced by Bahaghari Productions, runs March 5-April 3 at the Music Museum. Tickets are P600 and P1,000. Call 8919999 or 7210635.

E-mail the author at gcadiz@inquirer.com.ph

GIRL POWER. The musical's producers: (from left) Carmita Francisco, Nina Romualdez, Margie Floirendo and Precy Florentino

Text-a-poem winners known

NOI Cruz, a farmer from Pulilan, Bulacan, and Dale Altar, a Chemical Engineering major from UP Diliman, won the first prize in the last week of the Dionatext Text-A-Poem Contest of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts.

Ang palo ng magulang,
Parang ambon sa palay;
Pampaganda ng sapaw.
—Noi Cruz

Salita'y mas masakit,
Matalas pa sa tinik
Kung kapatid nagsambit.
—Dale Altar

The consolation prize winners are Alfred Guevarra of Malate, Manila; Jocelyn Barahan of Sampaloc, Manila; Norman Fortun of Las Piñas City; Raywin Catanaoan of Indang, Cavite; Sierra Marie Santos of Los Baños, Laguna; Ben Malaluan of Lipa City, Batangas; Francis Masnayon of Batangas City; and Michael Kho Lim of Malabon City.

Entries were texted from as far as Qatar, Kuwait, Riyadh, Bahrain and Hong Kong. National Artist Virgilio S. Almario, chair of the board of judges, said that literature is democratized by contests like the Dionatext. He added that the entries reflected the confidence and faith of Filipinos in the family.

The awarding ceremonies will be held at 2 p.m. on March 31 at Pulungang Claro M. Recto of the Faculty Center, UP Diliman. Call 9221830.

Dance studio holds workshop

STEPS Dance Studio marks its 10th anniversary this year. To kick off the occasion, owner Sofia Zobel Elizalde presented "Red, White and Blue," an evening of three dance suites by choreographer James Laforteza. Held at Steps Studio I, the hour-long mini-concert featured the Steps scholars dancing to the Bee Gees, Bach and Eric Clapton.

That event will be followed by the 10th Summer Dance Workshop on March 31-June 5, offering a wide variety of classes in ballet, jazz, contemporary, tap and streetdance, as well as musical theater by Trumpets.

Its ballet program employs the Royal Academy of Dance Syllabus from England. The impressive faculty for the workshop includes Anatoli Panasiukov of the Philippine Ballet Theater, director-writer Jaime del Mundo for acting, James Laforteza of Trumpets, and Isadora Duncan award winner Enrico Labayen for contemporary dance.

Steps Dance Studio will also hold auditions for full and half scholarships on March 14 at 3 p.m. The scholarship program has produced dancers presently performing with Ballet Manila, Philippine Ballet Theater, and Ballet Philippines. Jason Ignacio, a former scholar, was recently accepted into the Martha Graham Dance Company in New York.

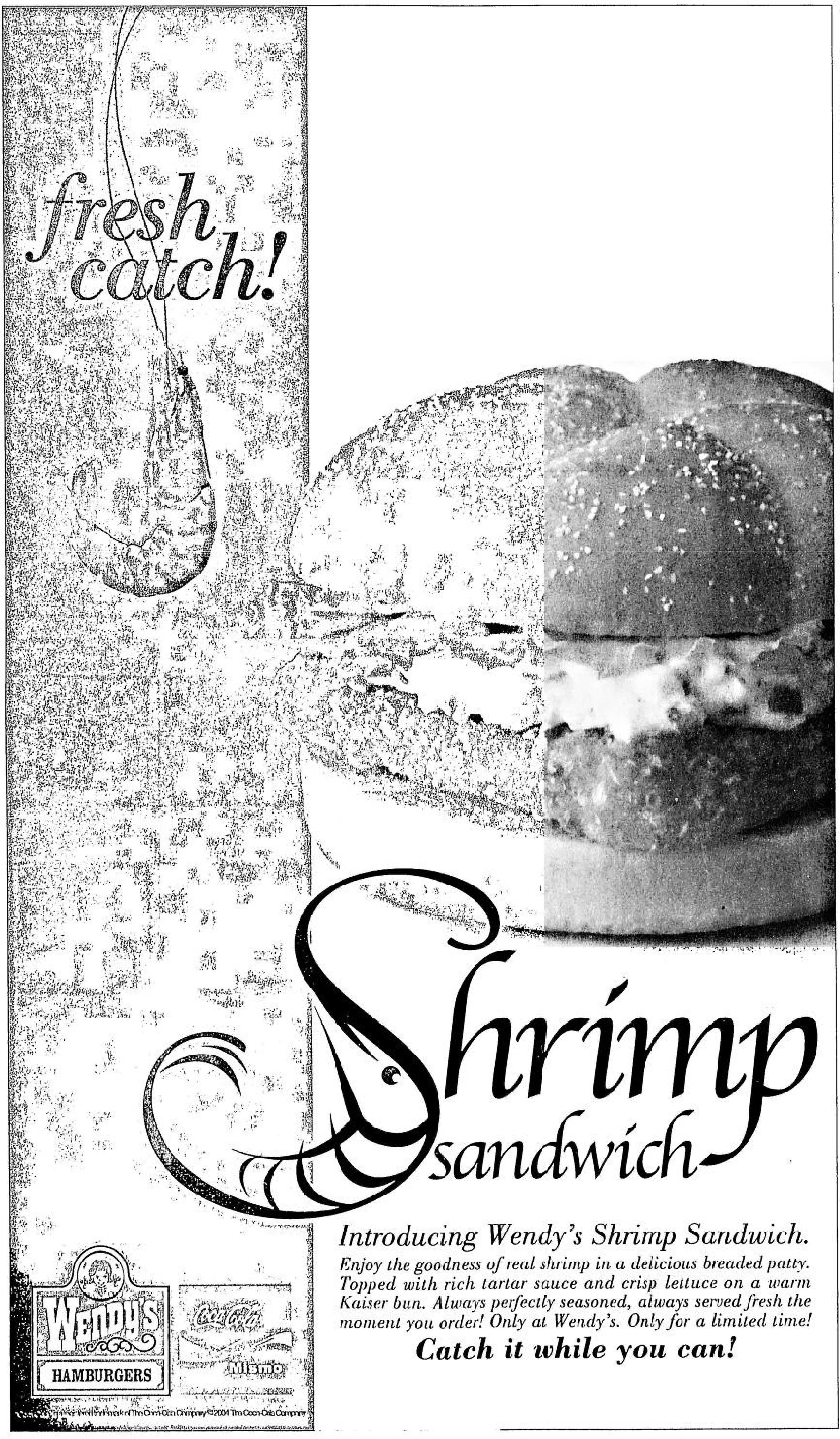
Steps Dance Studio is at Unit C1 Bldg. C Karrivin Plaza, 2316 Pasong Tamo Ext., Magallanes, Makati City or call 7572984/8438472 for information on the Summer Dance Workshop and Scholarship Audition.

Lecture on acting

BEVERLY Vergel, the manager of the ABS-CBN Talent Center, shares acting techniques that go beyond method acting on March 6, 2-4 p.m., at the Lopez Memorial Museum (G/F, Benpres Building, Exchange Road and Meralco Avenue, Pasig City).

Trained under Laurice Guillen and having undertaken Eric Morris acting classes, Vergel will talk about "being and craft" techniques.

Also, ongoing until March 15 is the exhibition "Essence and Sympathies." Museum days and hours are Monday-Friday 8 a.m.-5 p.m., and Saturday, 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Call 6312417 or 4492355; e-mail pezseum@skyinet.net.



Introducing Wendy's Shrimp Sandwich.

Enjoy the goodness of real shrimp in a delicious breaded patty. Topped with rich tartar sauce and crisp lettuce on a warm Kaiser bun. Always perfectly seasoned, always served fresh the moment you order! Only at Wendy's. Only for a limited time!

Catch it while you can!

LIFESTYLE

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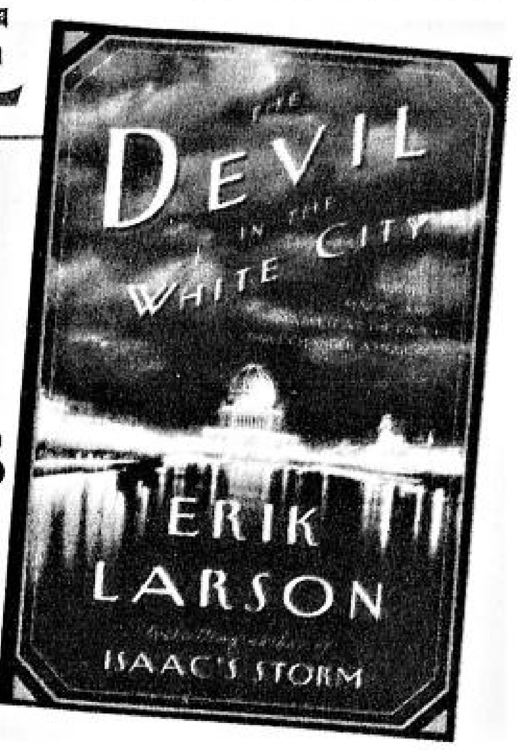
Book details Burnham's genius and madness

Erik Larson's story of two extraordinary men at Chicago's World Fair is so enthralling, you'll forget it's a true story

STORY ON PAGE E3



WHAT'S ON AT ROBINSONS

SIDE A

The country's top show band puts a little love in your heart this love month. Watch Side A... live, on their promo mall tour as they promote their 2 new albums which are both available on CD and VCDs.

[illegible]
Fountain Area
Robinsons Place Dasmariñas

March 7 (Sunday) 4 pm
Fountain Area
Robinsons Place Sta. Rosa

ROBINSONS Malls

EDITOR'S BOARD

On my night table

THREE or four books are on my bedside table at any given time and this is because my choice of what to read before trying to flirt with sleep every night depends on my mood. Lately my moods have been unlovely. Aware that they cannot be helped by sappy fiction or bad biographies, I now have on my nightstand two funny books.

"Eats, Shoots and Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation" by Lynne Truss is a hilarious, handy guide a dear friend brought back from London where it was a big hit last year.

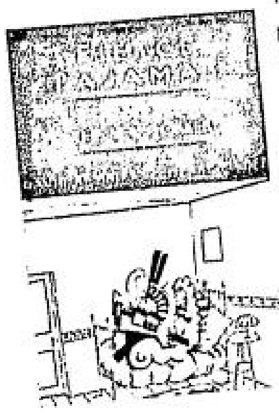
The Runaway #1 British Bestseller
Eats, Shoots & Leaves
The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation
LYNNE TRUSS

The other book is "Fierce Pajamas: An Anthology of Humor Writing from The New Yorker," which I picked up from the new and improved PowerBooks store in Greenbelt 4.

"Eats, Shoots and Leaves" is a manifesto for all people who get upset by misplaced or missing apostrophes and commas. On second thought, it is also for people who don't give a hoot about punctuation because, well, they really should. These marks, after all, are the road signs of language: slow down, detour, stop, etc.

The title comes from a joke that goes: "A panda walks into a café. He orders a sandwich, eats it, then draws a gun and fires two shots in the air. "Why?" asks the confused waiter, as the panda makes towards the exit. The panda produces a badly punctuated wildlife manual and tosses it over his shoulder. "I'm a panda," he says, at the door. "Look it up." The waiter turns to the relevant entry and, sure enough, finds an explanation. "**Panda.** Large black-and-white bear-like mammal, native to China. Eats, shoots and leaves."

"Fierce Pajamas," on the other hand, is a compilation of spoofs, sketches and poems from a comedy-infected magazine from the get-go. Humorists E.B. White, James Thurber and Garrison Keillor are well represented, as are Hollywood's Woody Allen and Steve Martin.



"Lying here in these fierce pajamas, I dream of the Harper's Bazaar world, the Vogue life; dream of being a part of it. In fancy I am in Mrs. Cecil Baker's pine-paneled drawing-room. It is dusk. (It is almost always dusk in fashion magazines.)..."

That's E. B. White— best loved for his "Stuart Little," "Charlotte's Web" and "The Trumpet of the Swan"—lampooning the glossies.

There's a third book that for some reason I can't get to the end of—Hillary Rodham Clinton's "Living History." Let's see, she was first lady, she's a senator now and, for sure, she'll want to be president... it's a must-finish, right? Nah, it can wait. *CBF*

What about you? What books are on your nightstand? E-mail us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

Hulog ng Langit

TUNA & MUSHROOM BAKED RICE MELT

Thank heavens! Bumalik na ang Tuna and Mushroom Baked Rice Melt! A special Lenten offering of hot, steamy rice covered in tuna, mushrooms and corn, topped with melted cheese. Tikman na ang maluwalhating sarap!

greenwich
Sa totoo lang, masarap!

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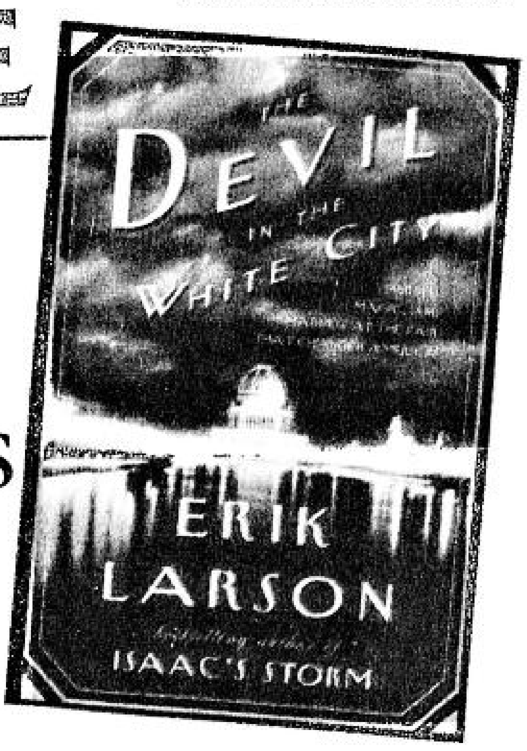
Book details Burnham's genius and madness

Erik Larson's story of two extraordinary men at Chicago's World Fair is so enthralling, you'll forget it's a true story

STORY ON PAGE E3



WHAT'S ON AT ROBINSONS

SIDE A

The country's top show band puts a little love in your heart this love month. Watch Side A... live, on their promo mall tour as they promote their 2 new albums which are both available on CD and VCDs.

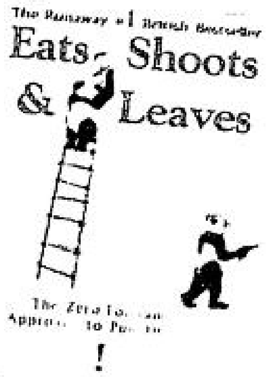
ROBINSONS Malls

EDITOR'S

On my night table

THREE or four books are on my bedside table at any given time and this is because my choice of what to read before trying to flirt with sleep every night depends on my mood. Lately my moods have been unlovely. Aware that they cannot be helped by sappy fiction or bad biographies, I now have on my nightstand two funny books.

"Eats, Shoots and Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation" by Lynne Truss is a hilarious, handy guide a dear friend brought back from London where it was a big hit last year.

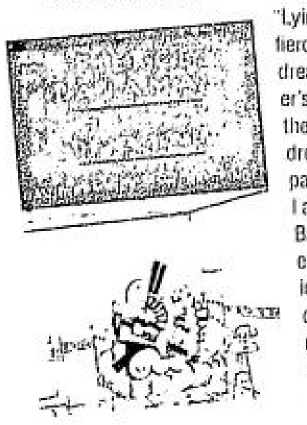


The other book is "Fierce Pajamas: An Anthology of Humor Writing from The New Yorker," which I picked up from the new and improved PowerBooks store in Greenbelt 4.

"Eats, Shoots and Leaves" is a manifesto for all people who get upset by misplaced or missing apostrophes and commas. On second thought, it is also for people who don't give a hoot about punctuation because, well, they really should. These marks, after all, are the road signs of language: slow down, detour, stop, etc.

The title comes from a joke that goes: "A panda walks into a café. He orders a sandwich, eats it, then draws a gun and fires two shots in the air. "Why?" asks the confused waiter, as the panda makes towards the exit. The panda produces a badly punctuated wildlife manual and tosses it over his shoulder. "I'm a panda," he says, at the door. "Look it up." The waiter turns to the relevant entry and, sure enough, finds an explanation **"Panda.** Large black-and-white bear-like mammal, native to China. Eats, shoots and leaves."

"Fierce Pajamas," on the other hand, is a compilation of spoofs, sketches and poems from a comedy-infected magazine from the get-go. Humorists E.B. White, James Thurber and Garrison Keillor are well represented, as are Hollywood's Woody Allen and Steve Martin.



"Lying here in these fierce pajamas, I dream of the Harper's Bazaar world, the Vogue life; dream of being a part of it. In fancy I am in Mrs. Cecil Baker's pine-paneled drawing-room. It is dusk. (It is almost always dusk in fashion magazines.).

That's E. B. White— best loved for his "Stuart Little," "Charlotte's Web" and "The Trumpet of the Swan"—lampooning the glossies

There's a third book that for some reason I can't get to the end of—Hillary Rodham Clinton's "Living History." Let's see, she was first lady, she's a senator now and, for sure, she'll want to be president ... it's a must-finish, right? Nah, it can wait **CBF**

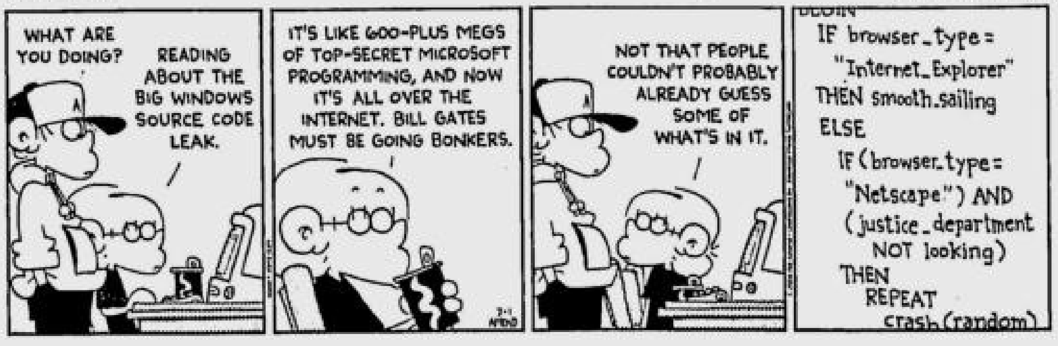
What about you? What books are on your nightstand? E-mail us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

Hulog ng Langit
Tuna & Mushroom
BAKED RICE MELT
greenwich
Sa totoo lang, masarap!

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

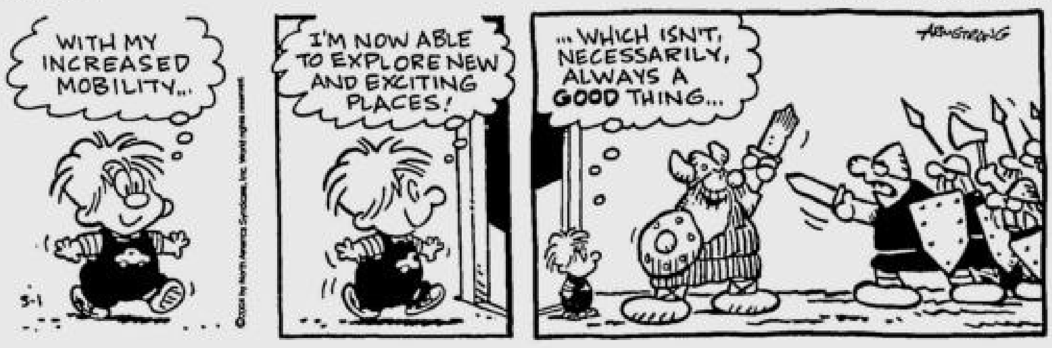
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
READING ABOUT THE BIG WINDOWS SOURCE CODE LEAK.
IT'S LIKE 600-PLUS MEGS OF TOP-SECRET MICROSOFT PROGRAMMING, AND NOW IT'S ALL OVER THE INTERNET. BILL GATES MUST BE GOING BONKERS.
NOT THAT PEOPLE COULDN'T PROBABLY ALREADY GUESS SOME OF WHAT'S IN IT.
IF browser_type = "Internet_Explorer" THEN smooth_sailing ELSE IF (browser_type = "Netscape") AND (justice_department NOT looking) THEN REPEAT crash(random)
3-1 AMEND

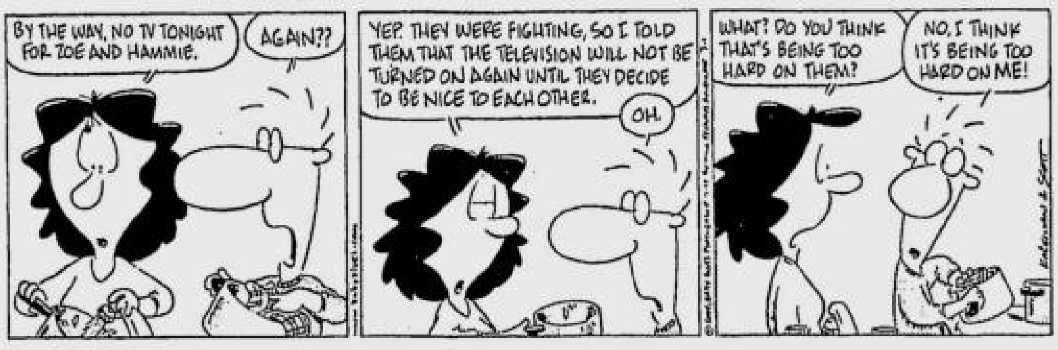
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


WITH MY INCREASED MOBILITY...
I'M NOW ABLE TO EXPLORE NEW AND EXCITING PLACES!
...WHICH ISN'T, NECESSARILY, ALWAYS A GOOD THING...
ARMSTRONG
5-1

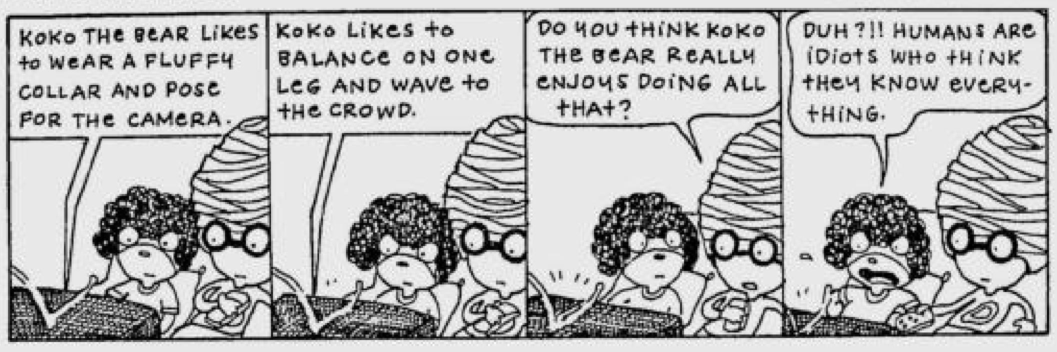
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


BY THE WAY, NO TV TONIGHT FOR ZOE AND HAMMIE.
AGAIN??
YEP. THEY WERE FIGHTING, SO I TOLD THEM THAT THE TELEVISION WILL NOT BE TURNED ON AGAIN UNTIL THEY DECIDE TO BE NICE TO EACH OTHER.
OH.
WHAT? DO YOU THINK THAT'S BEING TOO HARD ON THEM?
NO, I THINK IT'S BEING TOO HARD ON ME!

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


KOKO THE BEAR LIKES TO WEAR A FLUFFY COLLAR AND POSE FOR THE CAMERA.
KOKO LIKES TO BALANCE ON ONE LEG AND WAVE TO THE CROWD.
DO YOU THINK KOKO THE BEAR REALLY ENJOYS DOING ALL THAT?
DUH?!! HUMANS ARE IDIOTS WHO THINK THEY KNOW EVERYTHING.

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are artistic, and at the same time, you have strong technical skills. This allows you to express yourself with ease. You take care with your personal appearance. You like your surroundings to be lighthearted and easygoing. You appear quite relaxed to others. You are punctual and careful about details. A new cycle of growth and adventure begins this year.
Birthdate of: Ron Howard, director; Ralph Ellison, author; Harry Belafonte, singer, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Never lose sight of the fact that you can improve your job scene this year. You can do this by enhancing your current job or moving to a new one.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Definitely make plans for a vacation this year. Love, romance, playful activities with children, and fun, creative diversions are the high points for you in the months ahead.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Without question, you can improve your real estate and family situation this year. Quite possibly, you will expand your family through babies or marriage.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Your ability to be positive and optimistic this year is the key to your success. After all, everything begins with a single thought.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): All Leos are making more money this year. It's such a relief! You are also spending more money and increasing your assets through possessions and property.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): This is one of the luckiest years that you will have in more than a decade. That's why you have to make hay while the sun shines! Just believe in your good fortune!

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Efforts to expand your spiritual side will be successful now. You need to explore your inner world in more depth. Take quiet time for yourself.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Your popularity rating is practically soaring this year. Friends want to be in your presence. Everybody wants to see your face. Enjoy!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Your career can definitely improve in some way this year because lucky Jupiter (your ruler) is slowly moving across the top of your chart. You literally attract good fortune to you now.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Travel, higher education, the media and legal matters are particularly favored this year. Somehow, you will definitely expand your experience of the world.

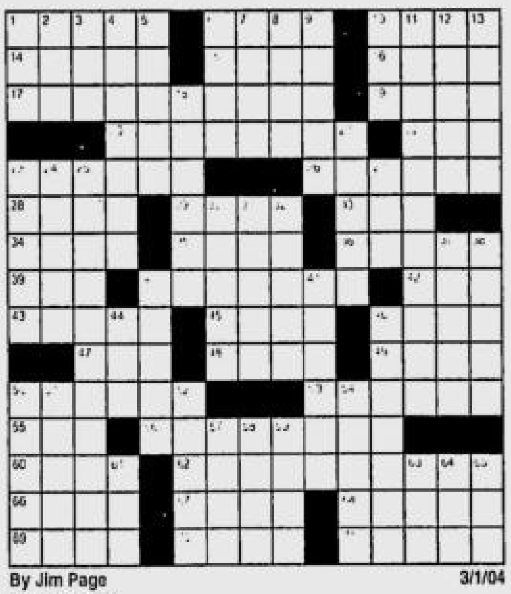
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Gifts, inheritances and loans or mortgages come your way now. You definitely stand to benefit from the resources and wealth of others this year.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): All your closest relationships are getting cuddly, cozy and sweet now. This is very emotionally reassuring for you. You need lots of hugging. (Don't we all?)

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Joses' houses
6 Places
10 Help a perp
14 "Witness" sect
15 At the summit of
16 Old Italian bread?
17 "The Birdcage" star
19 Retin-A target
20 Pulverizing
22 Yang's counterpart
23 Japanese P.M. (1972-74)
26 Minute amounts
28 Persia today
29 Fuzzy rests?
33 Less than chipper
34 Fish catchers
35 Demo ending?
36 Considers
39 Wildebeest
40 Takeoffs
42 Baby food
43 Potting soil
45 Florence's flooder
46 Dwindle
47 End of a racket?
48 Gusto
49 Of the ear
50 Shiny fabric
53 Island greetings
55 Lung filler
56 Dead
60 Military grp.
62 Drive selfishly
66 Ad award
67 Twenty quires
68 Shalala or Summer
69 Puppy cry
70 Take apart
71 Utter oaths

DOWN
1 No __ do
2 Physicians' org.
3 Make a lap
4 Depth charges
5 Greg Norman's nickname
6 Best friends
7 Provo's state
8 Morrison or Braxton
9 Dog-tired
10 After a fashion?
11 Park way
12 Pyle or Kovacs
13 Green years
18 Subtle meaning
21 Spreadsheets
23 Barest trace
24 Game site
25 Park way
27 Pub quaff
30 Sitcom pioneer Desi
31 San Diego ballplayer
32 Dumbfounds
37 Beatle follower?
38 Horn-rims, e.g.
40 Cut into small pieces
41 Fertilizer compound
44 Peg on a golf course
46 President Wilson
50 Brazen
51 Usher's beat
52 Indian jacket style
54 City in Yorkshire
57 "Fargo" producer
58 My goodness!
59 Start of a sphere?
61 Dandy
63 "A Chorus Line" number
64 Collection of anecdotes
65 __ es Salaam, Tanzania



By Jim Page
New York, NY

3/1/04

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

A	V	A	T	A	R	■	C	O	A	G	U	L	U	M
R	E	V	I	V	E	■	A	R	G	I	N	I	N	E
T	R	I	C	O	T	■	S	E	A	M	L	E	S	S
I	T	A	■	W	I	L	E	S	■	M	I	N	E	S
F	E	T	T	E	R	E	D	■	L	I	N	E	A	R
A	B	R	A	D	E	S	■	R	I	C	K	E	T	S
C	R	I	B	■	■	S	T	O	R	K	S	■	■	■
T	A	Y	■	A	R	O	U	S	E	S	■	F	A	D
■	■	■	P	L	U	N	G	E	■	■	M	O	N	O
A	R	E	O	L	E	S	■	T	A	L	E	N	T	S
B	E	V	I	E	S	■	A	T	L	A	N	T	I	S
A	G	I	N	G	■	[illegible]	R	E	A	K	■	A	L	I
C	A	N	T	E	R	E	D	■	S	E	N	I	L	E
U	L	C	E	R	A	T	E	■	K	R	O	N	E	R
S	E	E	D	S	M	A	N	■	A	S	S	E	S	S

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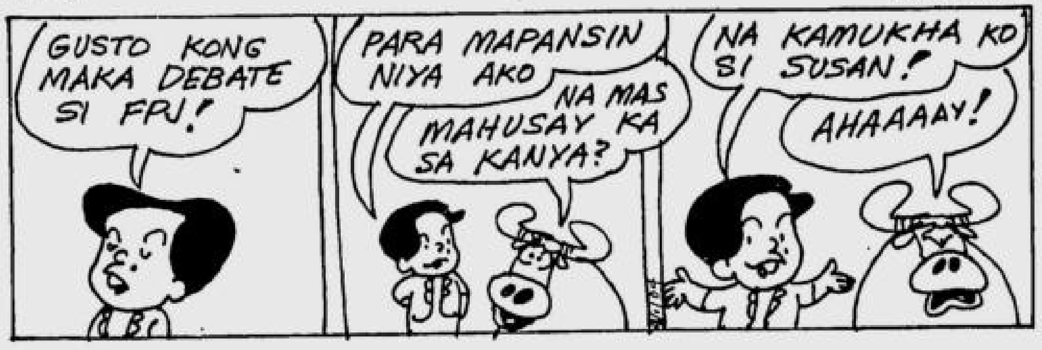
3/1/04

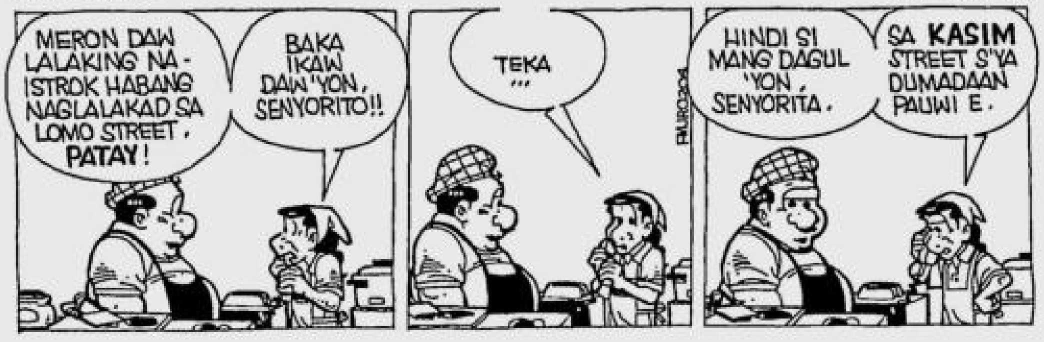
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


GUSTO KONG MAKA DEBATE SI FPJ!
PARA MAPANSIN NIYA AKO
NA MAS MAHUSAY KA SA KANYA?
NA KAMUKHA KO SI SUSAN!
AHAAAAY!

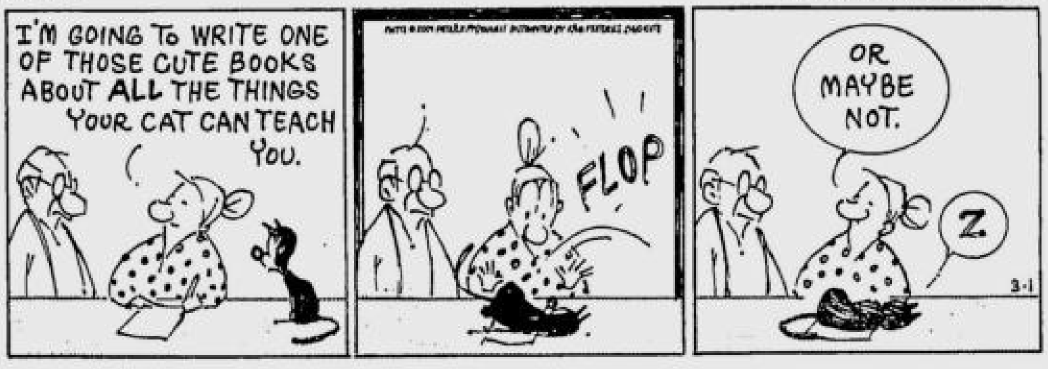
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


MERON DAW LALAKING NA-ISTROK HABANG NAGLALAKAD SA LOMO STREET, PATAY!
BAKA IKAW DAW 'YON, SENYORITO!!
TEKA ...
HINDI SI MANG DAGUL 'YON, SENYORITA.
SA KASIM STREET S'YA DUMADAAN PAUWI E.

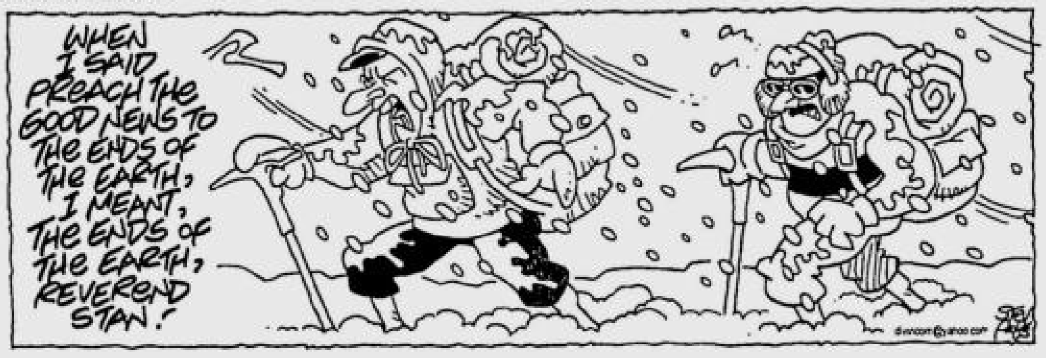
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


I'M GOING TO WRITE ONE OF THOSE CUTE BOOKS ABOUT ALL THE THINGS YOUR CAT CAN TEACH YOU.
FLOP
OR MAYBE NOT.
Z
3-1

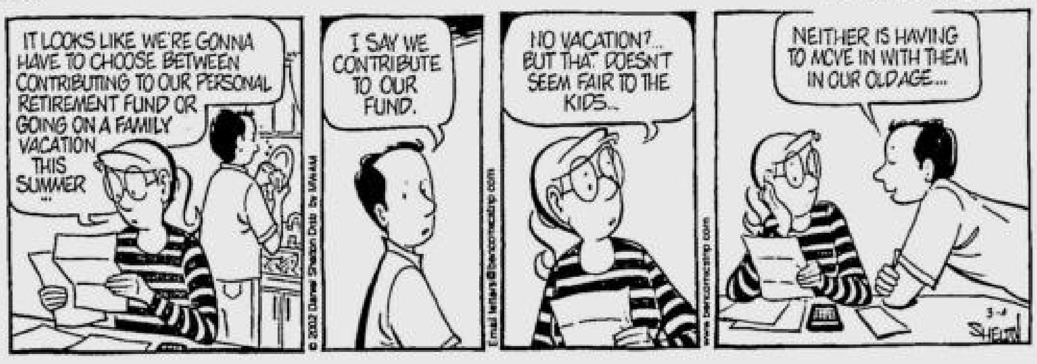
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


WHEN I SAID PREACH THE GOOD NEWS TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH, I MEANT, THE ENDS OF THE EARTH, REVEREND STAN!

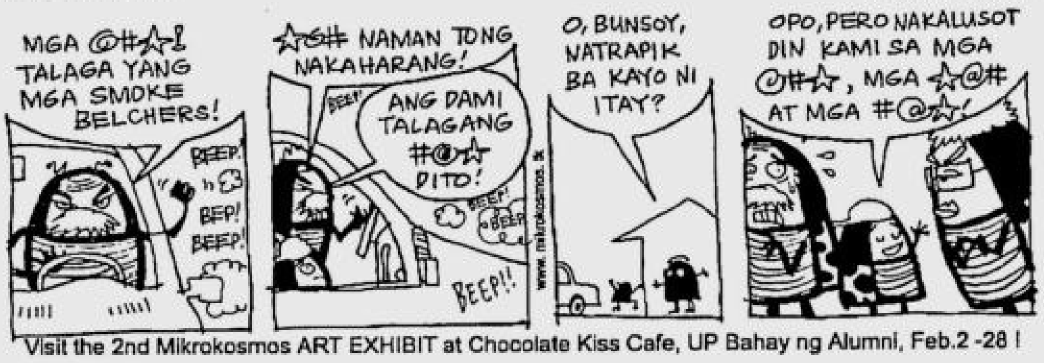
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


IT LOOKS LIKE WE'RE GONNA HAVE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN CONTRIBUTING TO OUR PERSONAL RETIREMENT FUND OR GOING ON A FAMILY VACATION THIS SUMMER ...
I SAY WE CONTRIBUTE TO OUR FUND.
NO VACATION?... BUT THAT DOESN'T SEEM FAIR TO THE KIDS...
NEITHER IS HAVING TO MOVE IN WITH THEM IN OUR OLD AGE...
3-1 SHELTON

MIKROKOSMOS

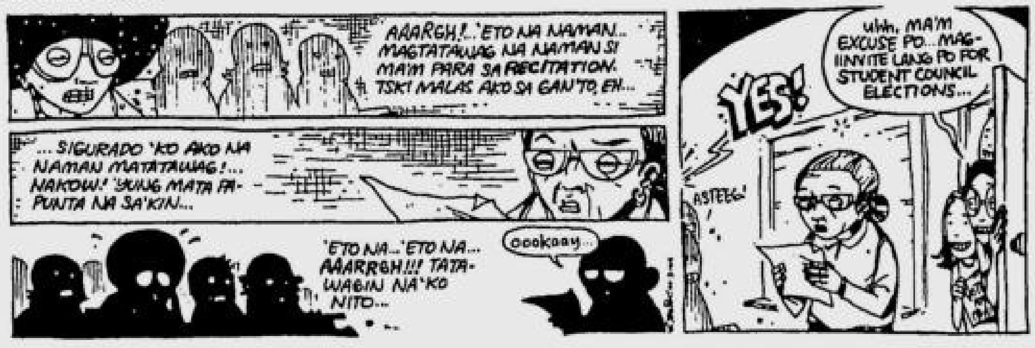
BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


MGA @#☆! TALAGA YANG MGA SMOKE BELCHERS!
BEEP! BEP! BEEP!
☆@# NAMAN TONG NAKAHARANG!
ANG DAMI TALAGANG #@☆ DITO!
BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!!
O, BUNSOY, NATRAPIK BA KAYO NI ITAY?
OPO, PERO NAKALUSOT DIN KAMI SA MGA @#☆, MGA ☆@# AT MGA #@☆!

Visit the 2nd Mikrokosmos ART EXHIBIT at Chocolate Kiss Cafe, UP Bahay ng Alumni, Feb.2 -28 !

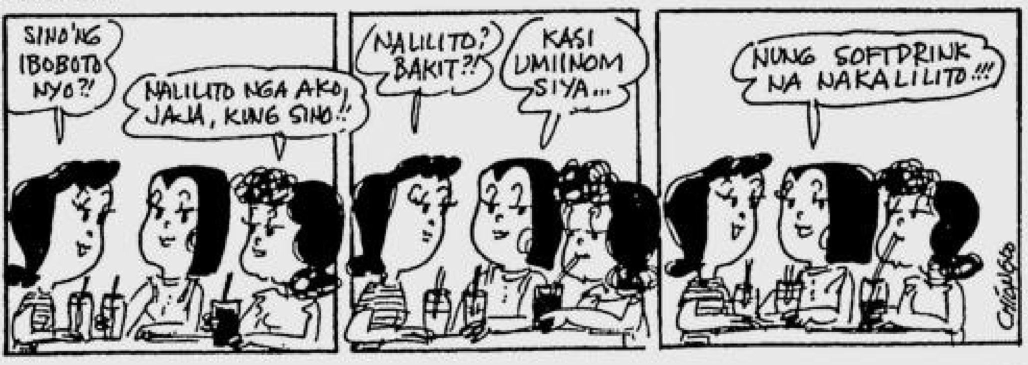
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


AAARGH!..'ETO NA NAMAN.. MAGTATAWAG NA NAMAN SI MA'M PARA SA RECITATION. TSK! MALAS AKO SA GAN'TO, EH...
... SIGURADO 'KO AKO NA NAMAN MATATAWAG!... NAKOW! 'YUNG MATA PA-PUNTA NA SA'KIN...
'ETO NA...'ETO NA... AAARRGH!!! TATAWAGIN NA'KO NITO...
oookaay...
uhh.. MA'M EXCUSE PO... MAG-IINVITE LANG PO FOR STUDENT COUNCIL ELECTIONS...
YES!
ASTEEG!

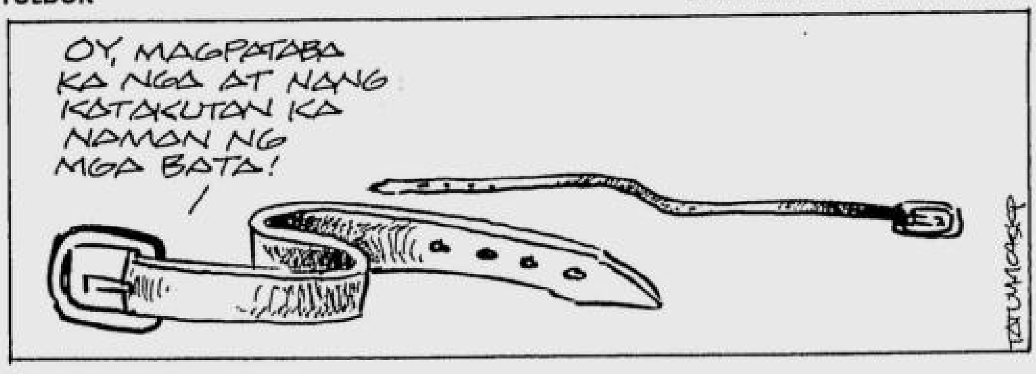
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


SINO'NG IBOBOTO NYO?!
NALILITO NGA AKO, JAJA, KING SINO!!
NALILITO? BAKIT?!
KASI UMIINOM SIYA...
NUNG SOFTDRINK NA NAKALILITO!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


OY, MAGPATABA KA NGA AT NANG KATAKUTAN KA NAMAN NG MGA BATA!
TATUMOASP

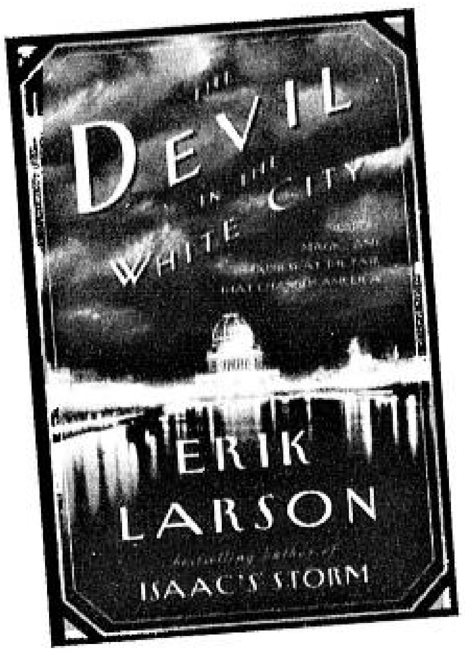
Book details Burnham's genius and madness

"The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic and Madness at the Fair that Changed America"
By Eric Larson
Crown Publishers, New York,
2003, 447 pages

By Ruel S. De Vera

REVIEW

The master architect comes across as a singular passionate visionary, a man as inspiring as he is flawed



IT is the last decade of the 19th century and man stands at the precipice of madness and utopia. Perhaps no other city embodies this dangerous metamorphosis as Chicago. By clinching the rights to hold the 1893 World's Fair, Chicago finds itself in the middle of mighty forces, drawing the greatest—and the most dangerous—men.

This is the irresistible premise of journalist Erik Larson's fourth book, "The Devil in the White City: Murder, Magic and Madness at the Fair that Changed America." In prose muscular as a slaughterhouse worker and as delicate as a debutante, Larson takes readers to that tumultuous and exciting time in America. He guides us through the maze of events surrounding the fair, officially called the World's Columbian Expedition, with two central figures, one who creates and the other, who only destroys.

Larson shows us the rise of the Fair through the eyes of Daniel Hudson Burnham, the brilliant and driven architect who would go on to change the very face of American architecture and even leave his mark in the Philippines (yes, he is that Daniel Burnham).

Against the odds, Burnham marshaled the sharpest designers and showmen in the country to come up with a display to amaze the world: the Fair, dubbed "The White City" because of the fortuitous choice of paint.

But the furious pace of change in Chicago also attracted a different kind of genius. He went by many names, but it was as Dr. H.H. Holmes that he gained infamy for. Like a shadow cast on the shining White City, Holmes meticulously and relentlessly killed one person after another, sometimes for money but mostly, apparently, because he wanted to.

These two men plied their disparate vocations amid the constant construction and endless hurrying, linked somehow but not linked, similar and yet so different. Meanwhile the world waited to see if Chicago could do it, build a World's Fair that would be unrivalled. Hudson applied himself to this task with inhuman intensity, never losing track of the prize, always remembering what he believed in: "Make no little plans: they have no magic to stir men's blood."

Meanwhile, Holmes went about his own devious plans like a dark mirror, building a house of horror, putting together a vault where no sound would survive and a stove meant to cook more than foodstuff. He kept gaining new names while more young women vanished.

Magical backgrounds

Larson stages this gripping drama with the most magical of backgrounds. The fair would give America incredible new elements: the Ferris Wheel, Westinghouse AC (alternating current) electricity standard, lasting labor practices, among many other things. "But the fair did more than simply stoke pride," he writes. "It gave Chicago a light to hold against the gathering dark of economic calamity."

Yet as more firms fell apart due to worsening markets and more businessmen were killing themselves, it became clear that the White City was an escape—and a trap. "The fair was so perfect, its grace and beauty like an assurance that for as long as it lasted nothing truly bad could happen to anyone, anywhere."

And inevitably success comes with tragedy and the reader will simply not be able to stop reading for such is Larson's delicious writing, just the right mix of journalistic objectivity and literary aplomb.

And it's a true story.

In a later chapter, Larson reveals the tireless effort taken to uncover all the information that went into "Devil." It's like a detective story by itself. This book not only chronicles the rise and fall of a creative genius and a psychotic serial killer, it also captures America in a time of massive flux. It involves real people and real events but reads like an irresistible work of fiction.

Burnham is a singular passionate visionary, a man as inspiring as he is flawed. Yet it is Holmes that readers will not soon forget, for rarely will readers encounter such a gifted yet hateful creature, a murderer of such charisma and, yes, genius, there is simply no one else like him—or so we hope.

It also becomes abundantly clear that even as Burnham's Fair rises to unbelievable heights, the fall will not be long in coming. In that sense, it is only a matter of time before the White City got devoured by the Black City; that grimy, hopeless other parts of Chicago now mired in economic despair. Similarly, Holmes may be carrying out his grisly deeds undetected, but sooner of later, someone will catch on to him. Someone just has to.

"Devil" is a crazy quilt of diverse elements: murder, business, progress, personal battles, historical watershed moments, ego, insanity, brutality and so much more. Like a circus ringmaster, Larson not only puts them all into the same big top, he makes it all work. It's so terrible and enthralling, readers will not be able to look away, a fitting tribute to a city—and a time—of humanity's best and worst.

Available in hardcover in PowerBooks.

New book sheds light on Josephine Bracken

WHEN Dr. Jose P. Rizal was executed at Bagumbayan on Dec. 30, 1896, one of the persons who grieved most was his Austrian wife—Josephine Bracken.

Despite having been so intimately linked to the national hero, however, there is little authoritative information about Bracken, aside from sketchy accounts, monographs and memoirs.

"Errante Golondrina, The Life and Times of Josephine Bracken," the latest title from New Day Publishers, aims to shed light on the woman Rizal loved and married.

The 200-page book is the first biography to come to Bracken's defense against allegations by some historians that she was illegitimate and not lawfully wedded to Rizal.

The book's author is Macario Ofilada, a great grandson of Bracken, and a holder of a doctorate in philosophy, with highest honors, from the Universidad de Salamanca, Spain.

The book is available at leading bookstores nationwide. Call New Day Publishers at 9288046 or 9275982.

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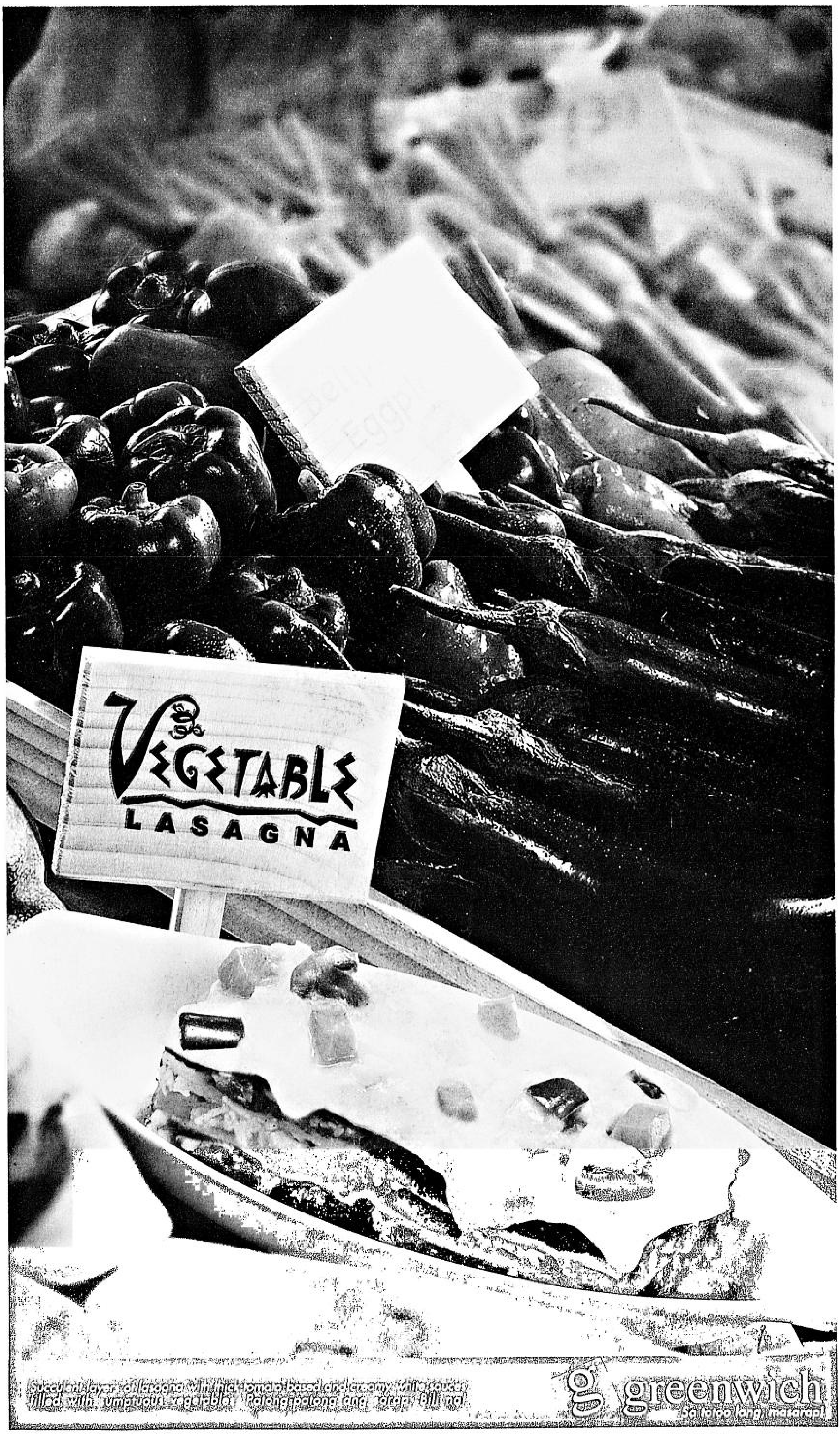


VEGETABLE
LASAGNA
Succulent layer of lasagna with thick tomato-based and creamy white sauces filled with sumptuous vegetables. Palong-palong ang sarap. Bili na!
greenwich
Sa totoo lang masarap!

Mindanao erotic imaginings in Cebuano

By Linda Kintanar-Alburo
Contributor

LATELY we feel Cebuano writers in Mindanao are threatening to outshine their peers in the home base. Writers like Macario Tiu, Satur Apoyon and Rolando Salvaña are winning prizes in local contests as well as the short story contest of the national Palanca in the past few years.

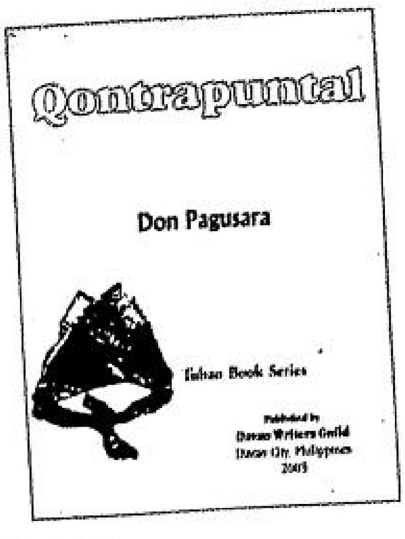
Belonging to chapters of the Ludabi and Bathalad, as well as the new Davao Writers Guild (which now has its own quarterly publication called Dagmay), the Mindanao writers have stirred a small hornet's nest on the state of Cebuano writers in Manila who belong to the Magsusulat, Inc.

"Qontrapuntal," its spelling seeming to call attention to alternative writing in Mindanao, is by veteran writer Don Pagusara, whose "Balitaw sa Bag-ong Rosas Pangdan" shocked my students no end but whose "Ug Unya Mibalak na Usab ang Mga Balud" ("The Waves Likewise Versify") mesmerized them.

In the briefest of forewords, Don explains the title: This volume marks a departure from the usual themes of his poetry, not anymore the "flaming words of social protest and patriotic outpourings" but "juices from erotic imaginings."

The contrapuntal idea is realized in the many poems about the pains and joys of living. There are more images of the weathers of the heart in the first section, but the sense of community and social realities still remain.

In fact, the lyrical and the political are well blended in his metaphors, on which Jun Dumdum writes in a blurb: "The political poems are couched in romantic imagery, and the romantic poems in political imagery." That is an observation that applies to all the four sections of the book, called "Pamahulagway" ("Imaging on Joy and Pain"), "Mga Kakulian sa Alampat" ("Ordeals of Art"), "Ang Tawo sa Tunga-Tunga" ("Man in Between") and "Qontrapuntal: Mga Inagos sa Kasingkasing" ("Contrapuntal: Heart Drops Unedited").



Protest imagery

An example of the use of protest imagery as metaphor for the experience of being confined in a hospital is the opening stanza of "Ward 3": *dinhi hugawng kaputi ang gitaptap/ ning ward sa karaang ospital nga/ daw higanteng sepulkro kansang/ ginhawaan dubok nga sumbingay sa mga/ kasakit ug kamatayon, o di ba kaha selda/ sa bilanggoang fort bonifacio buhi sa baho/ sa mga samad, gubat, rebelyon, welga,/ nagnana nga mga handumanan/ sa masakitong katilingban* (here is dirt-sprayed white spread/ on this ward of an ancient hospital/ which could be a behemoth sepulchre/ its entrails the decaying metaphor/ of agonies and deaths, or an enlarged/ block cell of a fort bonifacio prison/ alive with stench of wounds, wars,/ rebellions, hunger strikes, festering/ memories of a sick reality).

After a colorful and perilous life, Don seems finally to have settled in his native Mindanao; though from Tangob, Misamis Occidental, he now lives in Davao City, where he teaches at the Ateneo. His sense of return is graced by wonder at the rich lore of the *lumad*, hence some allusions to the folklore and culture of the Manuvu.

These allusions are explained in footnotes, e.g., the mythical characters Tuwaang, Tod'bulol, Mebuyan (who has multiple nipples on her abdomen), and Lukus-a-babai (the first woman); *tinalak* (T'boli cloth), and some flora and fauna.

Don used to write in English as editor of Adelante, student publication of the Colegio de San José-Recoletos in Cebu (which probably introduced Cebuano poetry to Josenians). In fact, he writes equally well in Tagalog, having written the Tagalog translations of two Cebuano anthologies: "Panulaang Cebuano" (1993) and "Dulaang Cebuano" (1997), both published by Ateneo Press. Wisely, in "Qontrapuntal," the local color is still preserved in a resistance to use equivalents of *anito*, *diwata*, etc.

The device called intertexting, which echoes previous texts, is found in a few pieces as outright dedication to writers of texts that have touched the poet, like the title poem "Qontrapuntal" which is inspired by Xoce Garcia Villa; "Potaheng Dila" ("A Lengua Menu") which is dedicated to Resil Mojares, Simeon Dumdum, Marjorie Evasco and other Cebuano-speaking writers in English; as well as in references to dead and living Cebuano writers like Fernando Buyser, Diosdado Alesna, Satur Apoyon, Jun Dumdum, Ric Patalingjug; and Shakespeare.

Frontier-pushing

The poems come with their English versions, though they don't always translate well, e.g., from the first section, these lines with the image *hangin*: *siyagit sa kasingkasing agilang migisi sa mga kristal nga panid sa hangin* (heart's cry hawklike shears the crystal sheets of wind); *awit sa ting-init gikumo sa alindangahang hangin* (summersong fisted by winds tropical); *mitabyog akong damgo lapos sa sihag langit-ka-buloknong hangin* (my dream swings to see-through sky-splendored air).

The examples show how the local writers can preserve and promote language by pushing its frontiers and experimenting in its new uses.

Such frontier-pushing is well exemplified by coinages, like *daklitpulong* (brief-word), *pamahulagway* (imaging), *kabalhinanagway* (transfiguration) and others. Neither does the poet hesitate using loan words out of necessity when new concepts and material things are introduced into the Cebuano-speaking world.

Let me quote the whole poem "Buntag Sayo sa CMU: Central Mindanao University, Musuan, Bukidnon" ("Early Morning at CMU") which uses a popular food as simile: *ang buntag nahiwa-hiwa/ sa lagpad nga mga kalsada/ ug mga lumbay sa mga tanom// murag pizza pie/ gikampat-kampat/ sa milyun ka milyung mga bulak// ug nagsalimuang/ libo-libong alibangbang/ nagpiknik/ sa lunhawng kahayag* (the morning is sliced/ into wide lanes/ and rows of hedges// like pizza pie/ carelessly smudged/ by a million flowers// like mad/ a thousand butterflies/ frolic/ in verdant sunlight).

You might ask, where's the "erotic imaginings" as promised in the foreword? Well, not one is written for the reader's titillation. Rather, in the typical Bisdak way called irreverence, the poet inserts such erotic items here and there.

Take, for example, the parodic "Anunsasyon ni Gabriela," which is reminiscent of the now popular "Balitaw sa Bag-ong Rosas Pangdan": *maghimaya ka eva/ puno ka sa talinghaga// gisangkil mong/ tuod sa himaya/ napungil ang damgo/ ni bathala// sa imong pagbilangkad/ nangguho/ mga mangtas ug ungo/ ibabaw sa yuta// gipasanginlan/ ang kalayo sa imong dughan/ ug tigmo sa imong bugan// naggaling sa tanang salapi ug bala// apan taudtaod na/ gitunglo mong tanang ginoo/ sa gugma ug giyera/ nagdibuho/ sa tanang ngisi ug tingab/ sa bag-ong dagway/ Monalisa* (hail eve/ full of riddles// you rub/ the stud of bliss/ rips the dreamwork/ of god// between/ your parted legs/ emerge monsters and ghouls/ on the earth's surface// they accuse/ the fire in your breast/ and the riddle in your groin/ mill all earth's money and bullets// but you have since/ cursed all the gods/ of love and war/ who design/ all the grin and grimace/ on the new countenance/ of monalisa).

UST National Writers Workshop accepting applications

THE UST Center for Creative Writing and Studies is now accepting manuscripts for the 5th UST National Writers Workshop to be held on April 25-May 1 in Baguio City.

The workshop will focus on poetry, fiction and one-act play, in both English and Filipino. It is open to writers who have not been awarded fellowships in any national writers workshop.

An applicant should submit five hardcopies and a diskette copy (MS Word format) of his/her manuscript, containing at least five poems, or two short stories or two one-act plays, a resumé and 2"x2" photo.

Applicants should also enclose a certification duly signed by his/her institution/company that the articles submitted are authentic and have not been copied from elsewhere.

There are 15 fellowships available, a percentage of which will be given to constituents of the Dominican Network of Schools, Colleges and Universities.

The deadline is on March 15.

Successful applicants will be granted fellowships that will cover modest board and lodging. To conduct the workshop are Ophelia A. Dimalanta, Cirilo F. Bautista, and the CCWS junior writing associates.

Call 7313101 local 8281.

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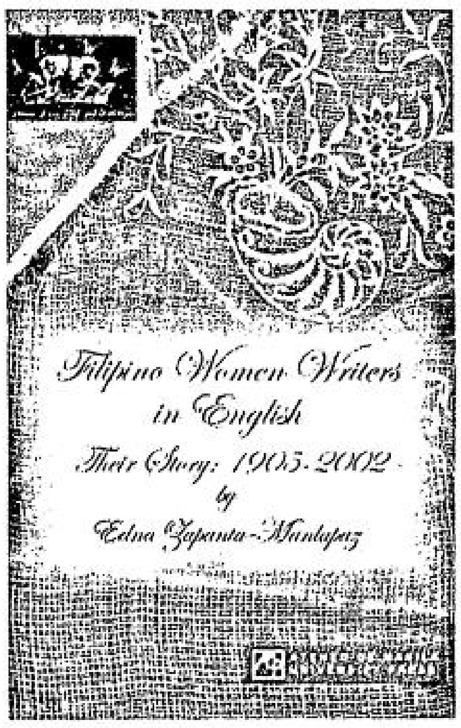


New book on Filipino women writers in English

TO CELEBRATE Women's Month, the Ateneo Library of Women's Writings and the Ateneo Press will launch Edna Zapanta-Manlapaz's "Filipino Women Writers in English, Their Story: 1905-2002," March 2, 4:30 p.m., at Quad 3 near the Social Sciences Bldg. of the Ateneo campus, Loyola Heights, Q.C.

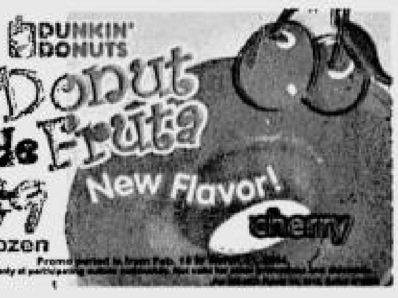
The book chronicles the evolution of Philippine literature simultaneously in terms of medium (English) and gender (women).

Among the women writers featured are Paz Marquez Benitez, Paz Latorena, Loreto Paras-Sulit, Angela Manalang-Gloria, Trinidad Tarrosa-Subido, Edith Tiempo, Virginia Moreno, Tita Lacambra-Ayala, Ophelia Alcantara Dimalanta, Estrella Alfon, Kerima Polotan-Tuvera, Aida Rivera-Ford, Gilda Cordero-Fernando, Linda Ty-Casper, Myrna Pena-Reyes, Merlie Alunan, Marra PL. Lanot, Rowena Tiempo-Torrevillas, Marjorie Evasco, Elsa Coscolluela, Merlinda Bobis, Fatima Lim-Wilson, Luisa Igloria, Lina Espina-Moore, Ester Vallado Daroy, Azucena Grajo Uranza, Cristina Pantoja-Hidalgo, Ninotchka Rosca, Jessica Hagedorn, Cecilia Manguerra-Brainard, Arlene Chai, Gina Apostol, Michelle Skinner, Tess Uriza Holthe, Rosario Lucero, Ines Taccad Cammayo, Marianne Villanueva, Nita Umali-Berthelsen, Joy Dayrit, Jessica Zafra, Connie Jan Maraan, Susan Lara, Lakambini Sitoy, Norma Miraflor, Reine Arcache Melvin, Erma Cuizon and Nadine Sarreal.

The book is available at the Ateneo Press bookshop and bookstores nationwide. Call 4265984 or e-mail unipress@admu.edu.ph.

LIFESTYLE

For feedback, text us at (0918) 382-4061 or (0916) 200-1160
or e-mail us at pr_lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph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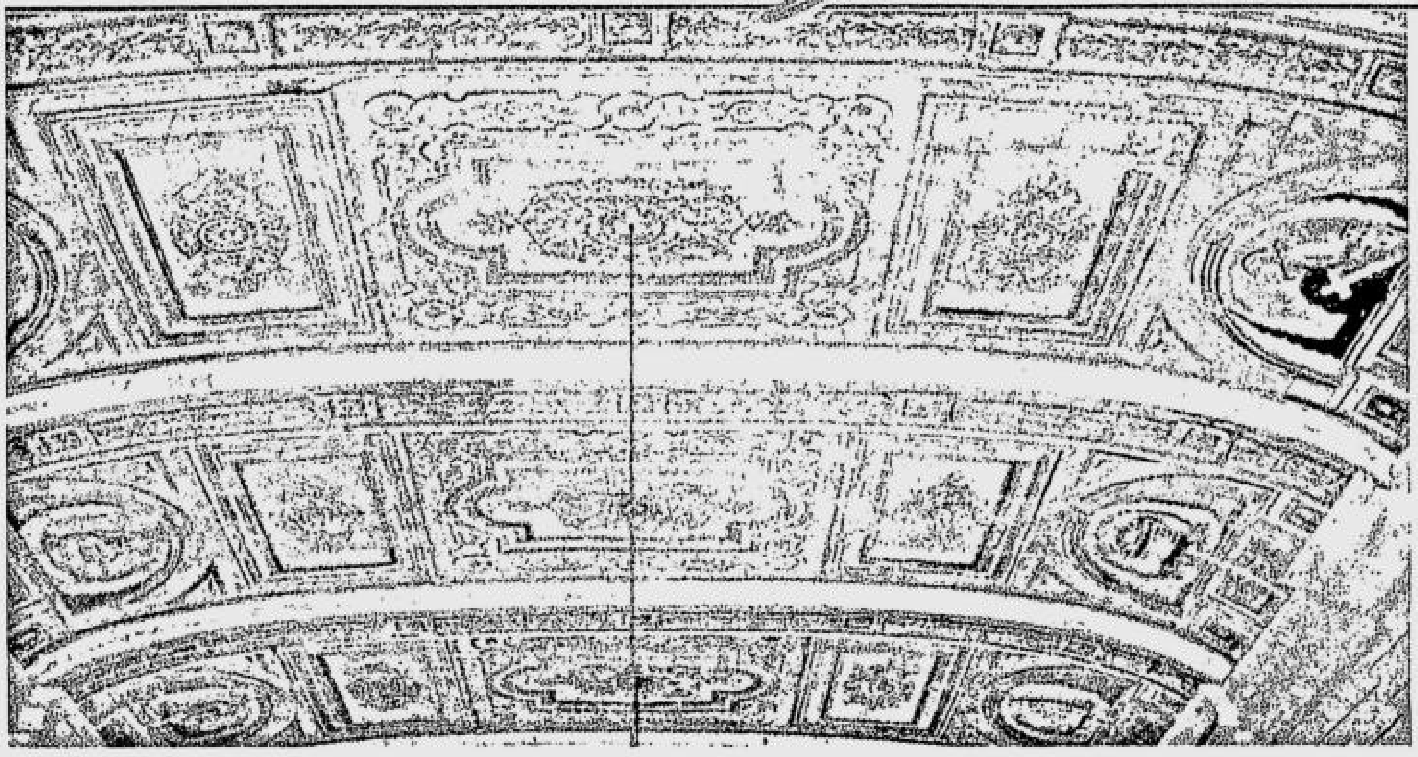
THE incredible ceiling of Calaca church in Batangas

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3.) Mar 8-12/ 8:30AM-5:30PM ADVANCE GUMPASTE & FOREIGN METHOD-P9,500 New method on gumpaste, flowers, objects, marzipan, quilting swags and ribbons, ribbon insertion, finest string works, lace pieces, fondant, chocolate fondant. NEXT SCHED: April 12-16
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5.) Mar 13/ 8:30AM-5:30PM LEARN SUGAR FREE CAKES AND BREADS-P2,500 Banana, Apple Almond, Carrot Cakes, Chocolate Walnut Cookie, All Wheat and Raisin Breads. NEXT SCHED: April 17
6.) Mar 15-19/ 8:30AM-5:30PM BASIC COMMERCIAL BAKING-P 11,500 (Including ingredients) 30 Recipes of basic cakes, breads, rolls, pies, pastries & cookies NEXT SCHED: Apr 19-23
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11.) Mar 27/ 8:30AM-5:30PM SUGAR FREE II- P2,500 Almond Lemon, Oatmeal Chocolate Chunk Cookies, Chocolate Chiffon Cake w/ light Choco Frosting, Chocolate Brownie Supreme, Chocolate Cake w/ Chocolate Frosting NEXT SCHED: May 1

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ALL4ART

Bea Zobel Jr.

MONDAY, Feb. 9, was a marvelous day. I went to bed happy that night my faith in my country restored.

I had spent the weekend in the diving resort of Solana in Anilao. My friends and I decided to stay until Monday as we wanted to visit Taal, Batangas. Except for a long overdue, unfinished national road, everything else was perfect.

We started the tour with a visit to an example of Philippine Art Deco architecture. This was the *municipio* of Bauan with its unique decorative elements. Then on to Bauan church, home to a beautiful wooden cross covered in silver. This cross is the centerpiece of the Batangas dance called "Subli." Finally we arrived in the town of Taal.

Our first stop was the Basilica of San Martin De Porres. This is a huge church with lovely neoclassical altars. Stepping out of the church's cavernous interior, we paused to admire the 19th century houses encircling the town plaza. Most interesting were a pair of three -story homes.

Next we went to visit the two houses of Doña Gliceria Marella de Villavicencio (oof! what a mouthful!). In one of these houses we were greeted by a fantastic lady, Baby Joven Quiblat, the great granddaughter of Gliceria. I was surprised by the bright, lively colors of her home. It seems that many interiors in 19th century Philippines were decorated with such sunny hues. This was the influence of Victorian palettes.

Never in my wildest dreams would have I ever thought we had houses painted like this. Baby and her husband had gotten the masterly advice of none other than art scholar Sonny Tinio to help preserve and restore the old house, thereby honoring the memory of the great grandmother. The fact that they carried out the restoration to pass down this showcase of history to their children, Joanne, JM, Michael and

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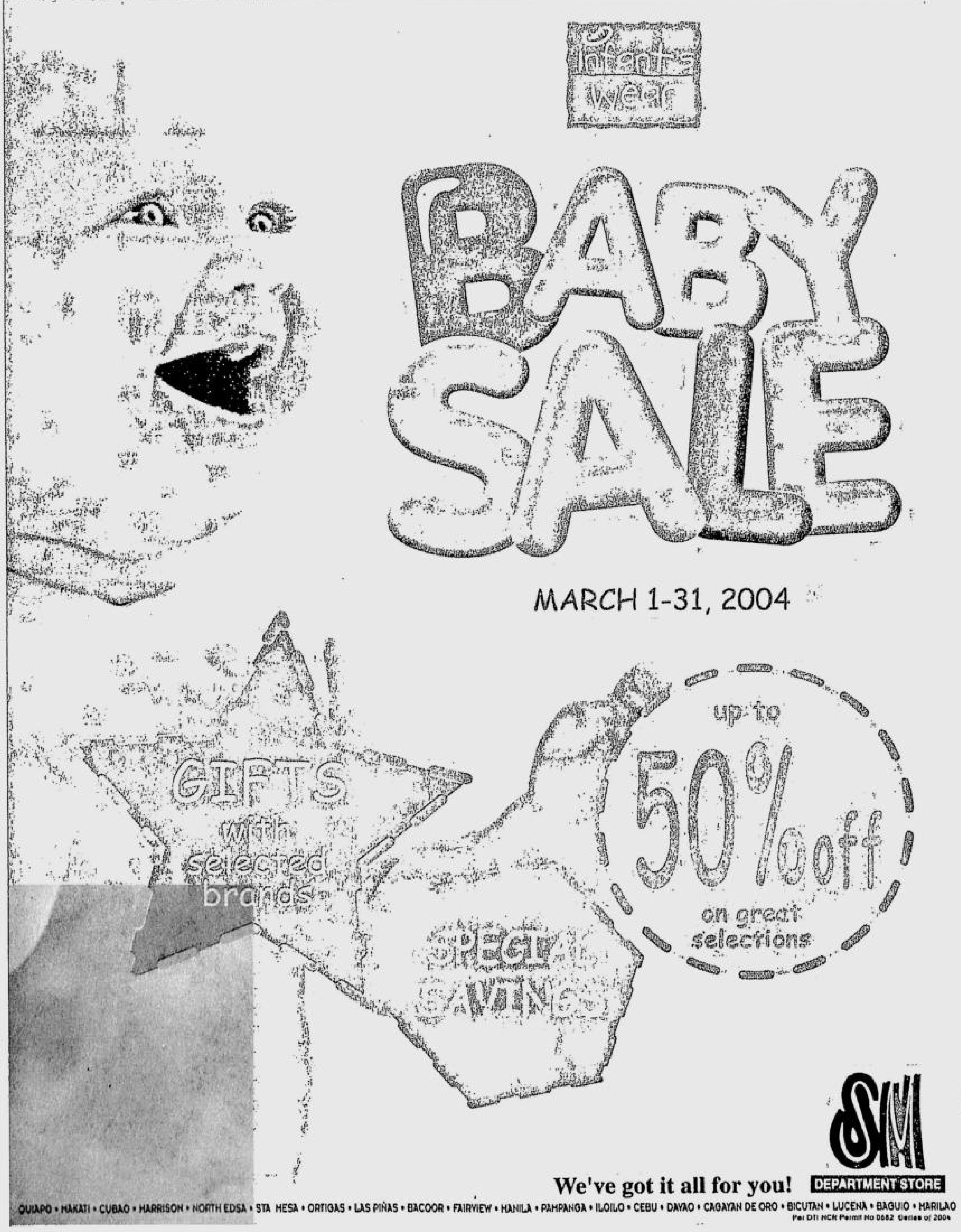
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Tape art recycles, critiques pop and pulp icons

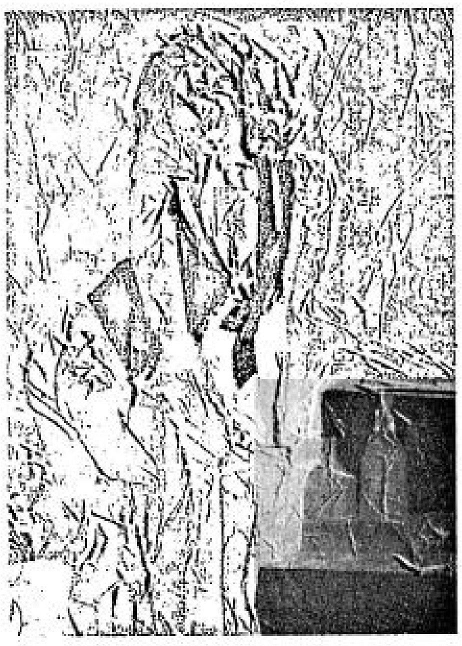
By Gino Dormiendo
Contributor

THE IMAGES do not easily conform to conventional ideas of what constitutes art and art making. Viewers are admonished to rethink their time-honored beliefs about the creative process, and must be prepared to be shocked by Bong Banal's irreverent critical discourse on the consumer society.

Opening today and running up to March 26, "Tape Art 2004" (Alliançe Francaise Annex Gallery, LRI Business Plaza) says it all, with the packaging tape quite visibly the most dominant medium, and which comes in various colors, depending on the moods and modes of the 32-year-old artist.

In lieu of the perfunctory canvas, we get printed paper consisting of recycled posters, calendars and display standees with images of models and product endorsers. These images belong to the celebrities in show biz, popular culture, sports and politics, as well as nondescript ones who acquired instant fame (or notoriety) from wars and calamities.

Banal, an art director in a leading advertising agency, has long been fascinated by consumerism and its impact on the human psyche. While still a student of fine arts at UP, he explored the vast potential of tape as medium to mask and unmask the faces behind those products through various advertising tools.


"ARA," colored tape on printed paper

Michael Jordan, appearing on a 7 ft. standee, in basketball garb and majestically poised to make a shot, has been recloaked entirely with packaging tape, from his black shoes to the ball aloft in his palms, with only the number and the team on his shirt to cue viewers in.

Sex sirens Ara Mina and Glydel Mercado are pin-up models of alcoholic drinks and cigarettes. With their faces and bodies covered with tape, one has to be extra discerning to decipher their identity.

There are images equally familiar but in a different sort of way, such as those of Afghan ladies, originally cloaked and of course refitted in burka, protagonists who have been dragged in the war against terrorism.

Though Banal had wanted images of well-known politicians too, their posters were not yet available when he was preparing the show. There is a poster of a famous boy band that he retrieved from a music store. One wishes he also found posters of the F4, Osama bin Laden and even Saddam to give the show a global perspective.

What makes Banal's appropriation of images of celebrity endorsers and pop icons politically correct is the philosophy to which he adheres: Art should have no monetary price attached to it. Everything in the show comes with no price, and, as agreed by artist and organizer, no work will be sold.

It is his final act of rebellion, indeed a revenge against a system that perpetuates commercialism.

Limpe's longevity

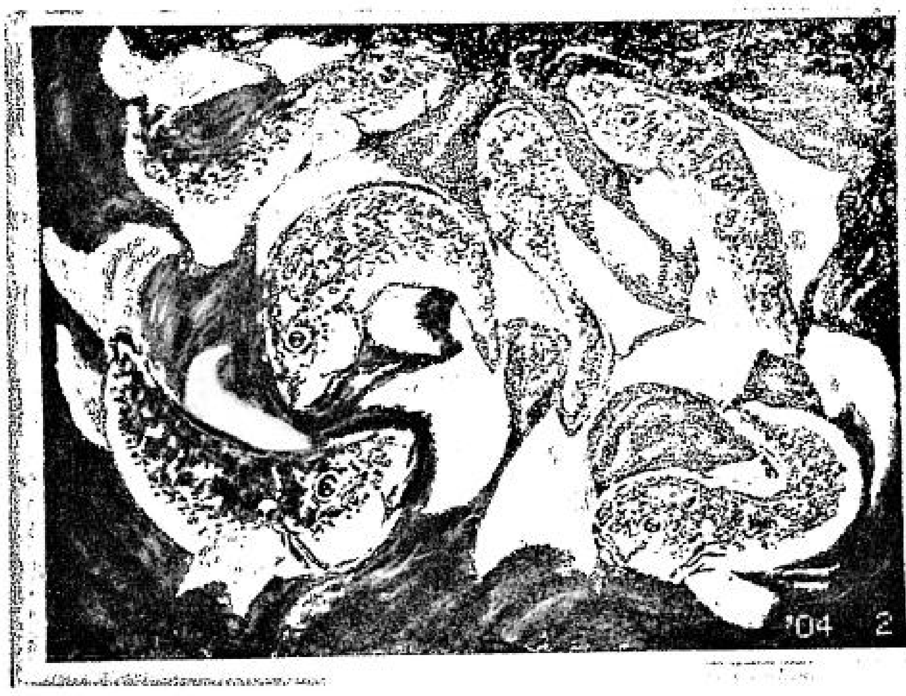
Though nearly two generations older than Banal, Julius Limpe never ceases to surprise. At 77, the former chairman of the Limtuaco Group of Companies still has the time to paint and mount his works. His just-concluded show at the Crucible Gallery, "Limpe Welcomes 2004," brings together more than a dozen works in various media done in various places here and abroad, particularly in Honolulu, Hawaii, where he stayed while recuperating from a surgery.

The artist's Expressionist style covering still lifes, aquatic life in tropical color, as well as a few nudes and portraits of the female subject. Though de rigueur, the subjects radiate a life of their own, particularly his aqueous creatures, which seem to pop out of the canvas or paper.

An accidental painter who has affiliated himself with the Tuesday Group, Limpe is the picture of a man content with the world as revealed by the mirth of his creatures, the gaiety of his blooms and the gentility of his women. It is no wonder the artist has himself become a rare specie in a world gone mad, and whose own passion for capturing aspects of life in this planet would humble his much younger counterparts who prefer to paint the ugly and the vicious, with no offer of hope and salvation.

E-mail the author at gdormiendo@yahoo.com

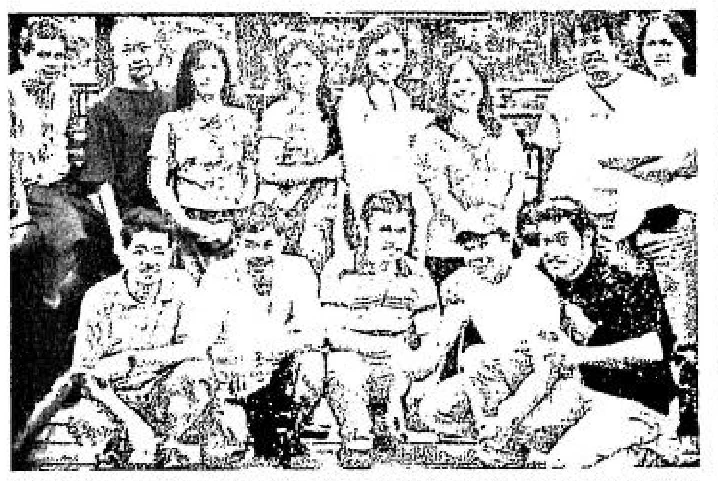
ARTIST Bong Banal and his Michael Jordan tape art

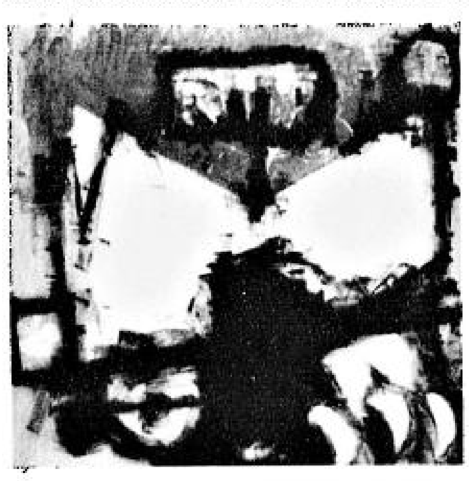


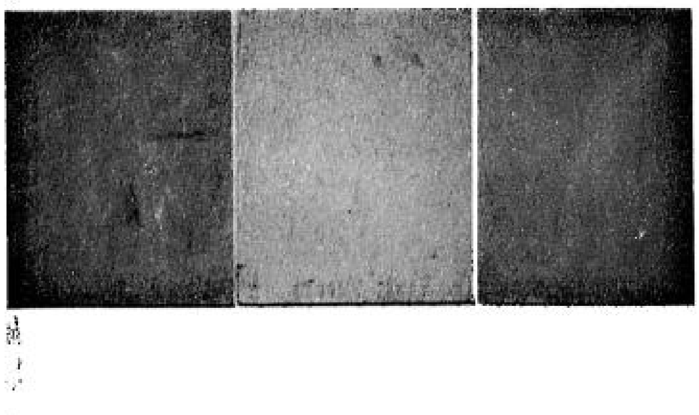
LIMPE'S painting of tropical fish

JULIUS Limpe with some of his works

Naval at Astra, Leano and Pacquing at West


"KULAY-KULAY" is the 14th group exhibit by The Aquarellists which opens today at 5 p.m. at the Art Gallery, G/F Philippine Heart Center Building, East Avenue, QC. Participating artists include Vic Bachoco, Cesar Del Mundo, Robert Deniega, Bert Duldulao, Raquel Faustinorio, Rose "Naning" Gavin, Vic Guzman, Joel Ibardolaza, Renn Maglalang, Nik Masangcay Jr., Babes Molata, Ojing Obemio, and Sherie Sta. Cruz. The exhibit runs until March 13.


"ONE GIRL'S Dream, Nightmare for All," acrylic on canvas, by Poch Naval


PACQUING'S "Key Top #6 to #8"

VISUAL ARTS

POCH Naval displays his latest works in the exhibit, "Humabon and I," at the Galerie Astra (2L, LRI Business Plaza, 210 Nicanor Garcia St., Makati; 7243032 or 7269015). He uses rough and chaotic images to draw the spectator away from commonly held notions of folklore and history. The images include the *enkanto*, the *manananggal*, Humabon and Gomburza. The viewer is allowed to fill the gaps in reality.

ERWIN Leano explores balance and composition in seemingly everyday objects in "Still Life," which opens on March 6 and lasts until the 16th at the West Gallery (Glorietta 4, Makati). While still favoring subdued colors, the artist uses a brighter palette this time. Call 7527028.

BERNARDO Pacquing sets aside earth colors and welcomes a richer palette in "Self-teaching Keyboard," ongoing until March 9 at the West Gallery (SM Megamall). The series is an intriguing juxtaposition of paints and pencil marks. It's the most massively colorful works he has ever done, Pacquing admits. Call 6341284.

PLATON Varquez is holding his solo exhibit until March 2 at Gallerie Y (Megamall). In his paintings, Varquez depicts the core values that have nourished his creative life force.

CARING Reyes-Zangenberg pays tribute to her sister, the late Inday Cadapan, in the show, "Farewell, Inday," at the Gallery 139 (3L, Glorietta 4, Ayala Center), ongoing until March 10.

MAG:NET Gallery (The Loop, ELJ Center, ABS-CBN compound, Eugenio Lopez St. and Mother Ignacia Avenue, QC) presents Jayson Oliveria's "Instinct vs. Learning" until tomorrow. The artist overturns the plasticity of abstract paintings by making the surface protrude and materialize before the viewer, producing representational works by explicitly referencing the objects being presented.

ARTSPACE features Bazar de Las Yslas until March 4 at Glorietta 4, Makati. The event celebrates Filipino design, craftsmanship and culture by showcasing items made locally using indigenous materials.

FINALE Art Gallery presents Gary Ross Pastrana's "Stray Bullets" on March 2-14 at the Artwalk, level 4, Megamall A. The paintings, mostly acrylics and collages on paper, are a continuation of the artist's 400-plus index card works that comprised his 2003 show.

RENAISSANCE Gallery showcases Fernando Sena's "Pastel Varied Subjects" on March 5-14 at the 4th floor, Megamall A. The artist uses pastel to depict solid forms including still life and human figure.

THE DRAWING Room showcases Kiko Escora's "Body Portraits" until March 20 at the ground floor of Metrostar Building, 1007 Metropolitan Avenue, Makati. The works are body and lifestyle portraits of friends of the artist.

PINTO Art Gallery (Silangan Gardens, 1 Sierra Madre St., Grand Heights, Antipolo) holds a series of exhibitions until March 31. Andy Maluche exhibits paintings, sculptures, photographs, drawings and performance art at Gallery 1. At The Gallery Shop are painted ceramic masks by Jojo Ballo. At The House are the recent paintings of doors by Tina Fernandez.

ALCOVE Photo Gallery offers Photo 101: Photography for Beginners on March 1 and 3, 6-9 p.m.

JUSTICE Bennie Adefuin-Dela Cruz will hold her solo art exhibit on March 1-15 at the Philamlife Lobby, United Nations Avenue, Manila. She will showcase 20 paintings done in varied medium depicting different subjects.

THE METROPOLITAN Museum of Manila exhibits prints from 17 different artists chosen from those published by Eric Linard during the past 30 years of his printmaking career. It runs up to March 20 at the Met's Catwalk Gallery, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Complex, Roxas Boulevard, Manila.

THE FABER-CASTELL Basic Art Workshop School Tour will be held on March 3 at Sienna College in San Francisco del Monte, QC; and March 12, St. Theresa's College, D. Tuazon St., QC. Call 3617391 to 92.

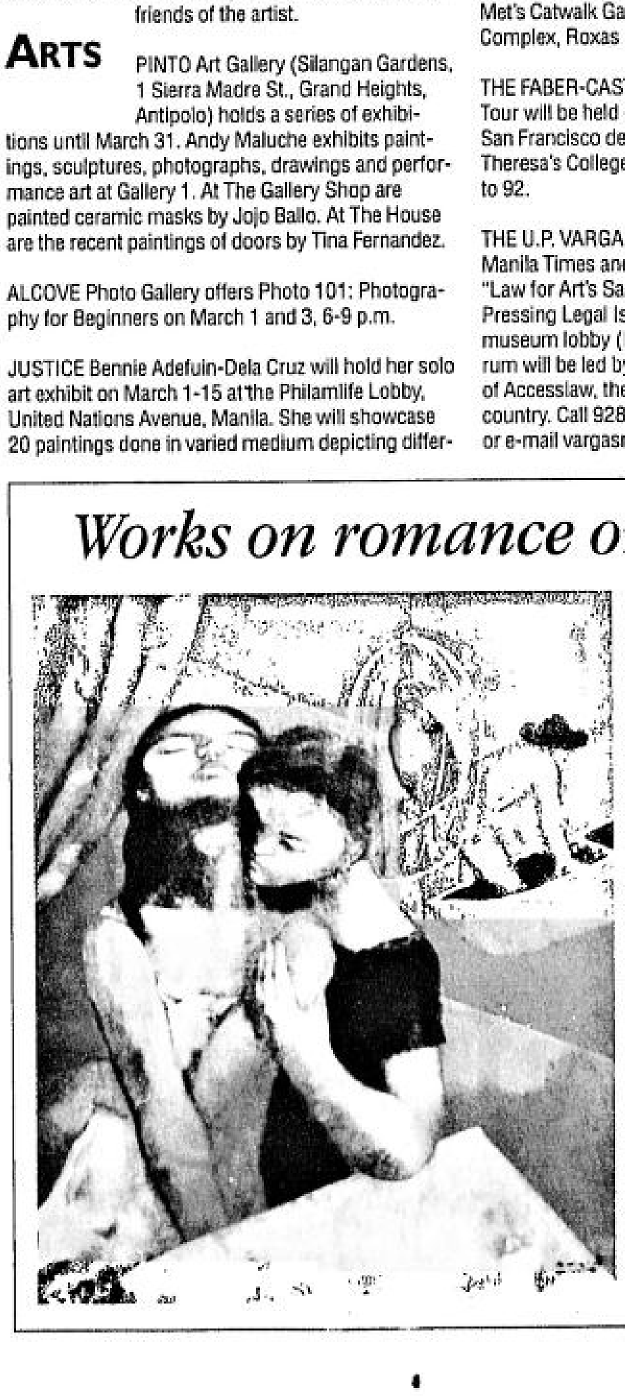
THE U.P. VARGAS Museum, Art Manila Quarterly, Manila Times and Accesslaw are sponsoring the "Law for Art's Sake: A Forum on Visual Artists' Pressing Legal Issues" on March 4, 2-5 p.m. the museum lobby (Roxas Ave., UP-Diliman). The forum will be led by lawyer Joseph Sedfrey Santiago of Accesslaw, the first multimedia law service in the country. Call 9281927 or 9205301 loc. 7408/7407 or e-mail vargasmuseum@yahoo.com.

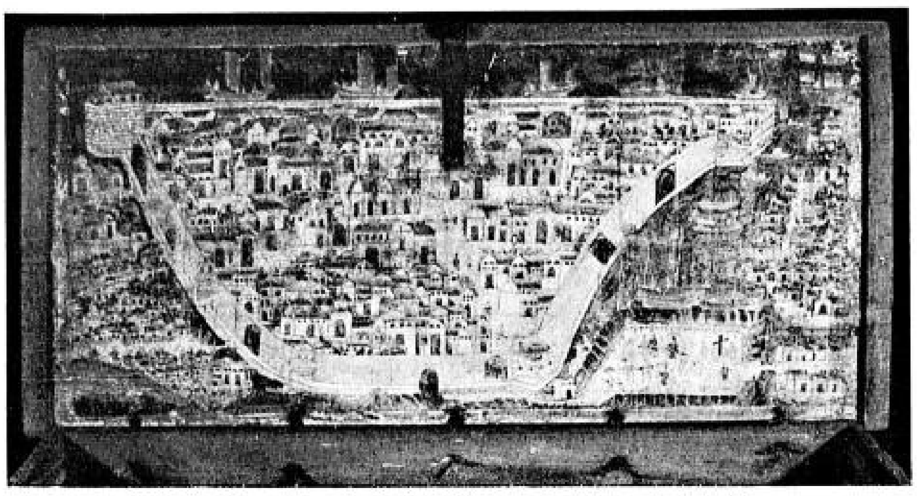
Works on romance on exhibit

"POUR L'Amour," a thematic art exhibit focused on paintings about love, courtship and passion, is running until March 10 at Galerie Joaquin (371 P. Guevarra St. and Montessori Lane, Addition Hills, San Juan).

The show features works by Marcel Antonio, Carlo Magno, Bayani Ray Acala, Lydia Velasco, Manny Garibay, Dominic Rubio, Edwin Tres Reyes, Carlo Saavedra, Gino Tioseco and the Guevarra Group of Artists. Special works by Onib Olmedo are also featured.

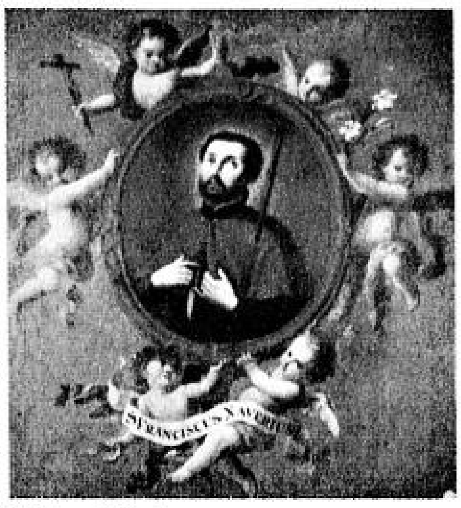
The show runs until March 3. Call 7239253 or 7239418.


"THE SEAMAN'S Daughter," by Marcel Antonio



FILIPINO Chest (1650-1660). The inside painting could probably be the oldest representation of Manila, then a walled city.

OUR Lady of the Rosary in ivory (17th century). This piece was initially used as catechism material by the friars.



ST. Francis Xavier

Conquistador exhibit fortifies Philippine-Spanish ties

By Ruth L. Navarra

MIGUEL López de Legázpi succeeded where others failed—he established the Spanish settlement in the islands of the Philippines. It was a feat that eluded his predecessors for more than 30 years.

Legázpi was commissioned by Spanish King Felipe II to colonize the islands and prove the existence of a return route by which ships could sail back from the Philippines to the American continent.

While his predecessors were driven by the principles of 3 Gs—Gold, Glory and God, he told his men (among them an Augustininan friar named Andrés de Urdaneta) when they left the ports of Mexico that his expedition was only for the Glory of God.

He landed in Samar on Feb. 20, 1565 and declared sovereignty over the entire islands. He then proceeded to Bohol, where blood was drawn. Not because of a sword, but because he made a blood compact with Rajah Sikatuna sealing their friendship and the fate of the country for years to come.

May of 1571, Legazpi continued his peaceful occupation of the country. He established Manila as a city and bestowed upon it the title, "ever loyal and distinguished capital of the Kingdom of Spain," after a dialogue with the three most influential rajahs of the region, Matanda, Lakan Dula and Soliman.

On Aug. 20, 1572, Miguel López de Legázpi died in Manila, leaving a legacy that would be remembered 400 years later.

Manila-Acapulco Galleon Trade

The task of completing the mission of their expedition fell into the hands of Fr. Urdaneta. He went on to find a return route to Mexico. When the route was confirmed and mapped out, it was used for over 200 years by the galleons that sailed from Mexico to Manila. The city's strategic location made it the hub of trade relations with China, Japan and Siam.

The country became the gateway of East and West, the destination of circumnavigation and scientific voyages such as one led by Alejandro Malaspina in the late 18th century, and a nexus of exchanges. These exchanges were not limited to trade but also extended to cultural and spiritual life.

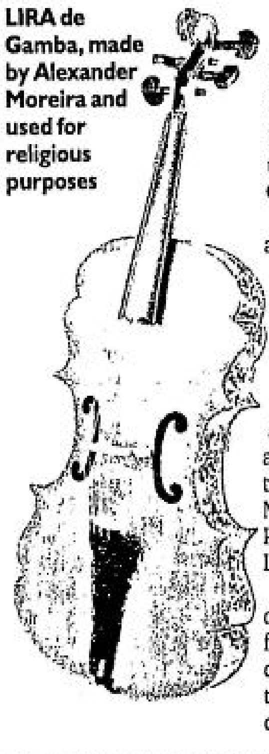
To commemorate Legázpi's 500th birth anniversary, Seacex (the Spanish official agency for foreign cultural events) and Instituto Cervantes, in cooperation with National Museum, will hold an exhibit titled, "The Philippines: Gateway of the Orient. From Legazpi to Malaspina."

It will feature authentic goods traded during the Manila-Acapulco Galleon Trade from the 16th to 18th centuries. Two hundred pieces of paintings, chinaware, furniture and other artifacts are included in the collection. Some of the pieces were made by Filipino artists, and will be coming back to the country for the first time.

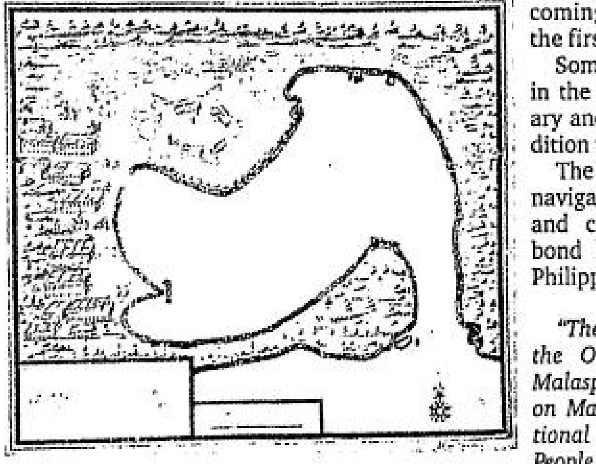
Some of the interesting items in the exhibit are Legázpi's diary and the annals of his expedition to Manila.

The exhibit aims to honor navigators, bring back the past and commemorate the close bond between Spain and the Philippines.

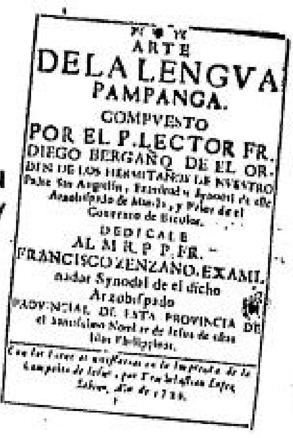
"The Philippines: Gateway of the Orient. From Legazpi to Malaspina" will be inaugurated on March 3, 6 p.m. at the National Museum of the Filipino People. The exhibit will end on April 30. Admission is free.



LIRA de Gamba, made by Alexander Moreira and used for religious purposes



MAP of Port of Acapulco (1730). This was the destination of galleon ships from Manila.



ARTE
DE LA LENGVA
PAMPANGA.
COMPVESTO
POR EL P. LECTOR FR.
DIEGO BERGAÑO DE EL OR-
DEN DE LOS HERMITAÑOS DE NVESTRO
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FRANCISCO ZENZANO, EXAMI-
nador Synodal de el dicho
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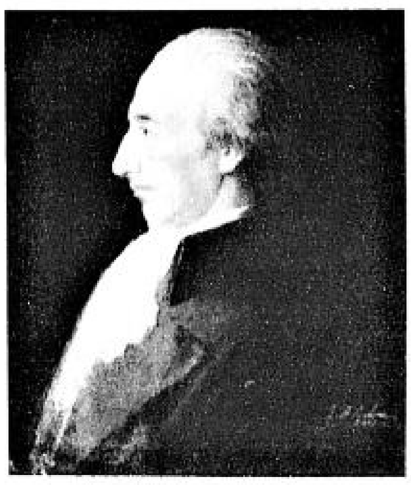
PROVINCIAL DE ESTA PROVINCIA DE
Islas Philippinas.

"KAPAMPANGAN Grammar," by Fray Diego Bergano. Next to Tagalog, Kapampangan, was the most widely used language in the country in the 17th century.



A PORTRAIT of Alejandro Malaspina painted by José María Galván Candela in 1891

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THE CHAMBER of Furniture Industries in the Philippines is holding the 8th Philippine International Furniture Show until March 2 at the World Trade Center at the CCP Complex. It features the latest Filipino designs of home furnishings and accessories in wood, metal, bamboo, rattan, stone, sea grass and other materials. Furniture traders from the US, Europe, Asia and the Middle East are flocking to the show. At right is the AAA Antique Repro.

THE RAMON Magsaysay Award Foundation recently hosted a museum appreciation workshop by John Silva (inset), senior consultant to the National Museum. The workshop was part of a series supported by the Ford Foundation, Department of Education and National Museum for teachers, museum workers and librarians.

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• 3rd/4th Passenger	$544.00	$1,504.00

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NATIVIDAD Noche, grand old lady of Taal embroidery

CHITO Noche and friend, embroidery masters of Taal

Heritage is history with love

DETAIL from Calaca church ceiling

From page F1

Matthew, truly moved me.

This family was aware of the necessity and importance of conveying its culture and heritage to the next generation so that children will have roots in their own country. It was important for the family to share a piece of its past, which hopefully the children will in turn pass on with great pride. Indeed, heritage is history preserved with love!

Resource center

I do, however, understand that many families cannot do restoration if they wished to. The expense involved in preserving historical homes is truly great. Wouldn't it be wonderful if someday a center or school could be set up where traditional building crafts can be taught?

This way, families like that of Baby would have a resource center that they could easily go to for assistance. What a dream!

Who was Gliceria Marella de Villavicencio?

She was one of our heroic Filipino women who actively contributed her money and energy (as well as ships!) to the revolution against the Spaniards. In recognition of her valor and contribution to the revolution, Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo named her Patroness General of the Revolutionary Host when the Philippine Republic was proclaimed on June 12, 1898.

We were likewise graciously allowed into Doña Gliceria's other home, which has also been restored and preserved by Baby's cousin.

My stomach soon started growling and we were taken to lunch at Gregorio Agoncillo's house, another beautiful historic home. We were joined by Mayor Cabrera who had to patiently listen to me while I went on and on about the heritage programs I had seen.

Two ladies who were also very involved in heritage programs, joined us: Aya Tankeh and Mini Alcasid (who happens to be the mother of pop sensation Ogie Alcasid). Ms. Alcasid's other son Tony completed our party.

I ate food typical of Batangas, especially of Taal: *adobong dilao, maliputo* fish (which they had taken three weeks to find), pork roasted on coconut husks, *bulanglang* (a vegetables stew)... (I feel hungry again.) Interestingly they ate roast pork with rice flavored with chocolate.

What a better way to digest our food than shopping? We went to Natividad S. Noche's needlecraft shop and bought out her whole stock! It was marvelous to see a handicraft shop so alive.

Her son Chito thankfully came back to Batangas and now handles the business. The walls are covered with pictures of Ms Noche receiving awards. Her shop was at its peak in the Marcos era as men had to wear barong to office.

Today the Noches distribute their raw materials to some 300 people who embroider for them. Wouldn't it be wonderful if more ladies were made to wear embroidered ternos? Can you imagine how many jobs we would create?

We ended our tour with Calaca church. I was dragging my feet as I entered through its wooden doors, thinking I was going to be a witness to yet another attempt at repainting our once resplendent interiors.

Can you believe it, I screamed as I looked up! I think the people deep in prayer were just about to throw me out for fear I was a mad foreigner except they soon heard "Beautiful, beautiful," as tears were running down my cheeks.

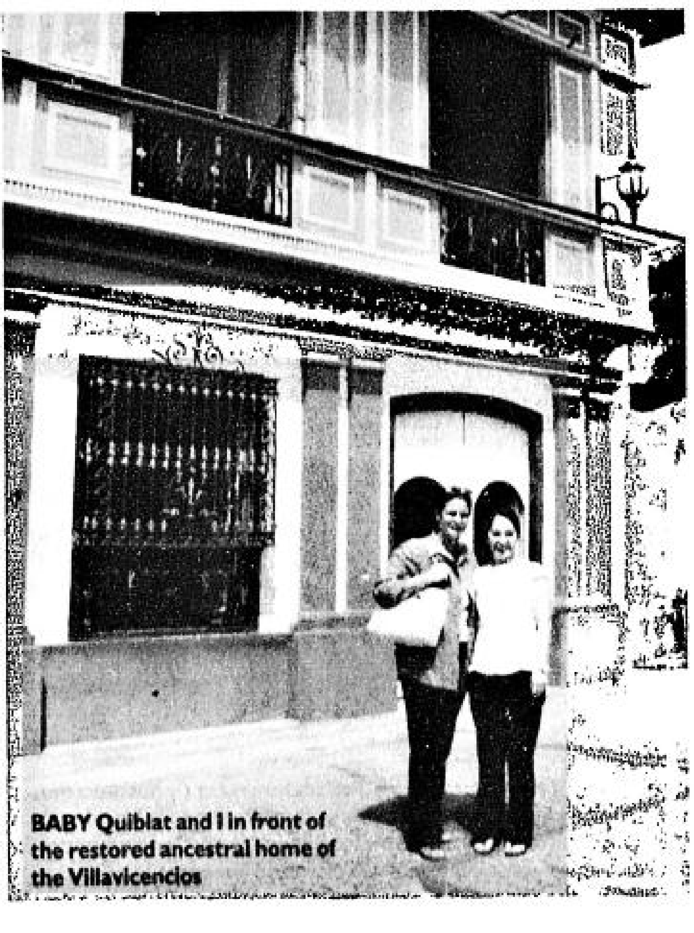
Okay, a little theatrical and straight out of "Sana'y Wala Nang Wakas," but I was overwhelmed! The rose-hued ceilings had been left untouched. I could finally sit down with a smile on my face and be wrapped in this piece of Spanish-Filipino history intact.

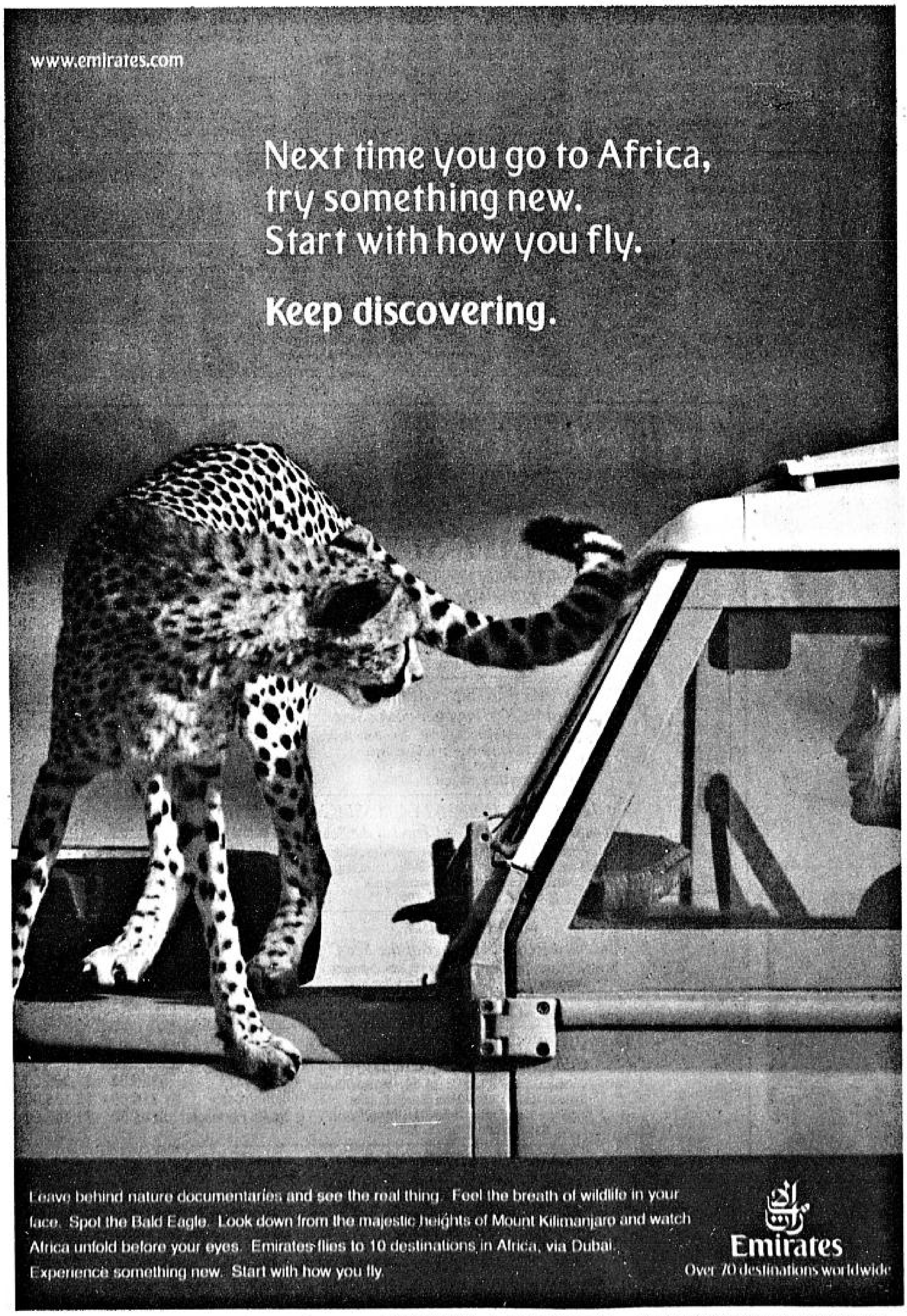
On our way back to Makati, the car screeched to a halt as we were determined to get down at Colettes' Buko Pie Pasalubong Stand. This stand sells all the delicacies of the surrounding provinces.

But what I loved most was the stand! All done up with bamboo!

I dream: Wouldn't it be wonderful to have a shop selling beautiful handicrafts from all over the Philippines displayed in a sophisticated fashion? Maybe someday! But that day of Feb. 9, I truly experienced an example of what we do right in the Philippines—our culture and heritage lovingly preserved by the local community.

For questions and comments, e-mail beartist@filipinaslibrary.org.ph or address letter to Filipinas Heritage Library, Makati Ave., Ayala Triangle, Makati City.


BABY Quiblat and I in front of the restored ancestral home of the Villavicencios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